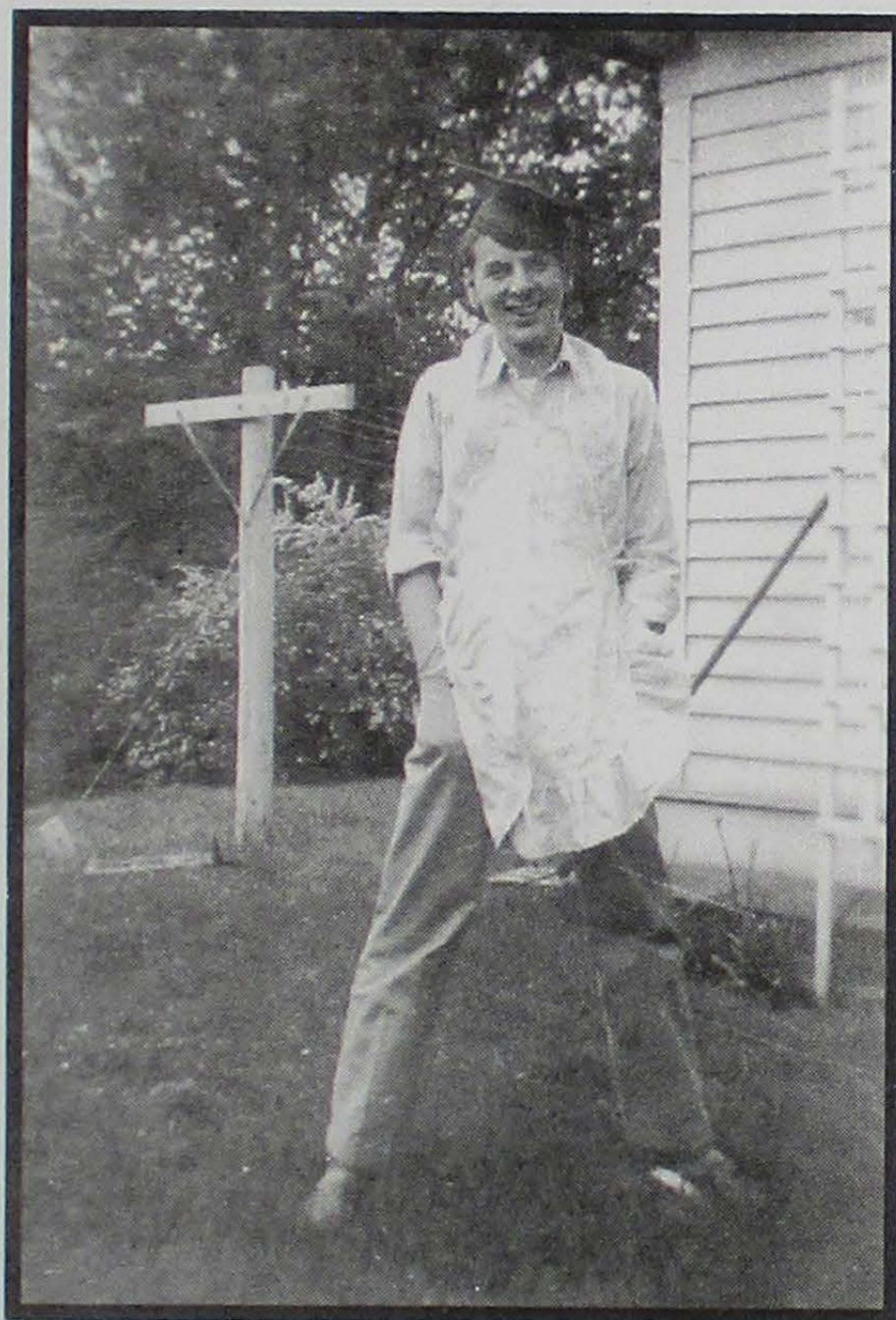


Just A Kid From Ames

Snapshots of my Mind



by

Martin Edwin Nass



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Martin Edwin "Ed" Nass

March 12, 1928 - December 25, 2007

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Biography

Twenty-five, fifty or One Hundred years from now children and adults will have the privilege of reading about the hard work that went into building Webster City and surrounding areas. His dedication to the facts of history will benefit many whom are yet to be born. Ed Nass...well done, good and faithful servant.

Martin Edwin "Ed" Nass, 79, of Webster City, died Christmas Day at Crestview Senior Living. A Celebration of Life will be held at 10:30 a.m. Friday at Asbury United Methodist Church, with Rev. Pete Peterson officiating. Burial will be in the Graceland Cemetery. Visitation will be at the Foster Funeral and Cremation Center from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Thursday and after 9:00 a.m. Friday at the church.

Martin Edwin Nass, son of Seward A. and Dorothy McGee Nass was born March 12, 1928 at Ames, Iowa. He lived briefly at Huxley. He attended schools at Ames and graduated from Ames High School in 1946. At the end of World War II and immediately after graduation, Ed enlisted in the U.S. Army. He served two years of occupation duty at Japan, where he worked in a public

health unit of the Occupational Army. He was discharged as a sergeant. Following his discharge, he attended Iowa State College at Ames and the University of Iowa at Iowa City, majoring in mathematics and science, graduating in 1952. However, his desire to start a teaching career was delayed by two years of service during the Korean War. He served in the Army Corps of Engineers in Germany and earned the rank of Second Lieutenant.

In 1954, he finally started his teaching career, which would span the next 45 years. His first teaching assignment was in the town of Pierson, where he taught math and science for two years. He then taught



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mathematics at Atlantic for nine years. By 1965, his desire to teach college-level mathematics prompted him to move to Webster City Junior College. That school became part of Iowa Central Community College, for which he taught computer science as well as mathematics. In addition, he taught night classes in math and computer science for Buena Vista University at Storm Lake and Fort Dodge for 19 years. He retired from teaching in 1995. For 9 years, Ed and Marj owned and operated the Book Nook.

Mr. Nass is survived by his wife of 50 years Marjorie; son and daughter-in-law, Brian and Ronda Nass of Rochester, MN; daughters and sons-in-law, Miriam and Scott Carlson of Stanhope; Mara and Bryan Moll of Clive; grandchildren, Bethany and David Olsen; Greg Nass; Jenny Nass; Ben Carlson; Sarah Carlson and Connor Moll; sister, Gloria Danielson of House Springs, MO; brother, David Nass of Desert Hot Springs, CA; several nieces and nephews.

He was a member of Asbury United Methodist Church, where he served on various committees and taught Sunday School. A lifetime of hobbies have included photography, gardening, reading and research on the history of Hamilton County and Webster City. In addition to writing several books about local history, he assumed the editorship of the 1984 History of Hamilton County, project of Curtis Publishing Company of Dallas, TX, in cooperation with radio station KQWC.

With the support of the Webster City Rotary Club, he made two historical videotapes of Webster City history.

He served on the Board of Directors of Kendall Young Library from 1980 to 1994. He was a member of Diamond K (Kiwanis Club).

Various awards and recognitions include the Iowa Central Community Colleges Superintendent's Award in April of 1987, Outstanding Adjunct Faculty for Buena Vista University in 1988, Outstanding and Dedicated Service Award in 2002 from Diamond K, an award for his historical information from Webster City and Hamilton County in 2004, a certificate of recognition for civic commitment to Webster City in

December of 2005 from the mayor and the Man To Man Faithfulness award in 2006 (Asbury United Methodist Church). When Webster City celebrated the Sesquicentennial this year, Ed was selected as the Grand Marshall.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be given in discretion of the family.

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Just A Kid From Ames

Snapshots of My Mind

by

Martin Edwin Nass

Just a Kid From Ames

Snapshots of My Mind

A Memoir

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Dedication

I have had a wonderful life, and I decided some time back that I wanted to share it with my family. This book is a series of recollections of events in my life, starting when I was three years old.

This book is dedicated to my grandchildren:

**Bethany Nass
Benjamin Carlson
Gregory Nass
Sarah Carlson
Jenny Nass
Connor Moll**

and to my future great-grandchildren.

I must also recognize the support of my wife, Marjorie, as she has listened to these stories for over 42 years without a whimper. She provided constant proofreading, as I struggled to record my memories.

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Chapter One

Earliest Recollections

Duff Street in Ames

I know that there are some that will dispute my recollections by saying I was too young to remember. Perhaps the very earliest recollection might be because it was a story that my parents passed on to me when I was very young. The rest of these early day recollections are all very vivid to me.

I was born when my parents lived in the upstairs of a big house on Duff Avenue in Ames. It was located about where the dental offices are located just east of the Mary Greeley Hospital. We lived in that apartment until I was three years old. My parents used to put me down to bed for a nap when I was fully clothed. The bed was a wrought iron bed with side rails. Sometimes when they put me down I was not sleepy so I had to lay awake on the bed. I do recall the bed but I do not recall what happened next. Apparently I removed one shoe, pulled back the mattress and put the shoe down into a coil spring. The mattress popped back in place and I went off to sleep.

When my mother picked me up at the end of my nap, she could not find my shoe. She asked me and I did not know where it was. This happened during the Great Depression and my father did not have a steady job, having lost his hardware store in Huxley, Iowa, earlier. Money was very scarce and the loss of a shoe was tragic. My mother and dad each quizzed me asking me about the missing shoe. I recall the many times they searched the whole house without luck. There was nothing to do but take me to a store and buy me another pair of shoes. I can imagine today how that must have crimped the family budget. The next spring, as we packed up to move to Huxley, the shoe fell out of the spring as my dad picked up the spring.

Huxley, Iowa

We moved into a small four room house in Huxley east across the road from the Fort Dodge and Southern Interurban tracks at the west side of the town. The creamery was located there so all trains stopped to pick up milk, cream, and butter. This house was heated by one pot-belly stove in the living room. My dad burned coal that he picked up from the other train tracks, wood that he gathered in nearby woods, and even old newspapers. One time, my Uncle Eddie, stopped in to warm up. He had been hired to deliver advertisements to houses in Ames, Huxley, and other towns. He rode the interurban to each town and walked the streets delivering the ads. When he got to our house, he talked with my mother and warmed up. As he prepared to leave he stuffed a large stack of ads into the stove.

The lady next door, on the corner of the block, was Mrs. Legvold. Her two older daughters worked in a café on the highway. I could not say the name Legvold very well but I do recall going to her back door and saying, "Hi, Lady." She always had time to talk with me and many times fed me cookies.

We walked around the small town as Dad visited with the many people that he knew. His grandmother, Kari Nass, lived in a small house a block away. That house stands today. It was built by my grandfather, A. E. Nass, who was a carpenter and owned the A. E. Nass Hardware. My father worked there from the time he quit school in the eighth grade. He left in World War I to serve in the infantry with the Rainbow Division in France. When he came back in 1919 he resumed working at the hardware until the Depression.

One day, my father and some of his friends were standing in the Main Street in front of the bank. Dad spoke with the others about the fact that the bank "busted." That puzzled me so I drifted over to the bank and walked all around the building looking it over carefully. Then I went back to the street and told my dad, "It's not busted. I walked all around it and did not find any cracks." They all started laughing. Dad explained to me that the term "busted" meant that it closed because it did not have any money anymore.

My father lost all of his money at this time so he was very unhappy. The store was sold to pay the debts incurred. The farmers who bought hardware on credit could not pay their bills. They had no money either. My father did day jobs where he could find them. The reason we moved to Huxley was because the house was owned by a relative, and we could live there free. Mother found a job in Ames at the Memorial Union kitchen making salads. She hitchhiked the nine miles to work and back. At first all went well, but one night Mother reported that she had gotten a ride with "bootleggers." She told us that she rode in the back seat of a Model A Ford and discovered that beer bottles were on the floor and seat all covered up with blankets. Dad worried about her safety, but she continued the trips daily.

Oak Street House in Ames

After one year, my father was hired as a janitor at Iowa State College - but only on condition that my mother give up her salad job at the Union. Since jobs were in very short supply, Iowa State had a rule they called "anti-nepotism" where they would not hire two people from the same family. Dad started work for \$72.00 a month. We moved to a house on Oak Street in Ames just south of the bus barn for Midwest Transit Company. (At the time the bus operated with a different name.)

Here my early recollections increase greatly. I still have a picture of the drop leaf table and two stools that my grandfather made for me and my sister, Betsey. It was taken at this house. To keep me busy and out of the house for some time, Mother gave me a salt shaker and told me that if I sprinkled salt on a robin's tail, the robin would become my pet. I ran all about the yard one afternoon until I figured out that she did not tell me the truth.

At Christmas-time she told me and Betsey about Santa Claus. I was skeptical because I did not see how a big fat man and a sleigh could be pulled up into the sky. Mother told me that if I jumped high enough I could fly, too. Another afternoon of jumping up and down brought me to the conclusion that again my mother had not told me the truth.

My early recollection of starting to school begins when we lived on Oak Street. My mother told me that we had to go to Round Up and register for school. The school was Whittier, the closest school to our house. When I got there I saw many other kids with their mothers. We entered the room, and after Mom filled out a bunch of papers, we were told to go to a corner of the room where I was to take off all of my clothes and wrap up in an Indian blanket that Mom had brought with her. No way was I going to do that! I balked and barked, but Mom finally convinced me that I could remove my underwear after she put the blanket around me. Then we lined up behind other blanket-wrapped kids, both boys and girls.

The doctor and a nurse were located at the head of the line. The doctor examined each kid, while the mother opened the blanket just far enough. I wanted none of that, and I kept my blanket clutched very tightly around me. With Mother's persuasion, I inched forward until it was my turn. The doctor quickly completed his exam and pronounced me fit, and I scooted back to the corner to get my clothes back on.

It was in this house that our family nearly died one night. A neighbor lady came to our house and knocked on the front door because she saw no activity at our house. When no one answered her knock, she peered in the front window and saw my father lying in the hallway near the front room. She ran home and called the police. When they arrived, they broke out a window panel in the back door and rushed inside. They dragged us all out to the front yard and managed to get us all awake. Then they opened all of the windows in the house, shut off the gas, and called the gas company to investigate. The gas company employees found that there was a carbon monoxide leak in the furnace which could have killed all of us. After that time, Mother insisted that we not have gas, so we moved again.

Walnut Street House

We soon moved to a house where the Target Store was recently located. At that time the school athletic field was across the street to the west, and further west was the Field House. We lived in the front half of

the small house; a Mr. Anderson, our landlord, lived in the back half. He was quite a drinker. The noise never bothered me, but Mother complained that he came home drunk nearly every night and staggered around in his part of the house. We lived here during the summer before I started to school.

Mother and I were good friends while we lived here. She thought that I should learn to fly a kite, so she made a kite for me out of paper, sticks, and string. I recall her running along the south side of our house trying to get the kite into the air. It never got into the air. She took me for walks, talked to me about our town, and took me to parks. One time she packed a lunch and took me to Sopers Mill. As we waded in the water, she told me about the early days when the mill ground flour. I don't recall Betsey being with us. This was before Gloria was born, so maybe she got a friend to come sit with her.

The most traumatic thing that happened here was when I slid down the cellar door. The door was made of wood and I decided it would be fun to slide on. I scrambled to the top of the door and started sliding down on my shoes, but I slipped and traveled to the bottom on my rump. I felt great pain as my seat got filled up with splinters. I ran screaming into the house. Mother's friend was with her at the time. Mother removed my pants and put me over her knees. She got out some tweezers and went to work on me. There were so many splinters that her friend got on the other side and pulled splinters, too. I was screaming in pain all the time. The mailman came to our door and knocked on the screen and asked what was the matter. He must have thought that they were beating up on me.

618 13th Street

Since the landlord's drinking bothered Mother so much she told Dad that we had to move again. He found a two-bedroom house on the south side of 13th Street and we moved in. Betsey and I shared a bedroom. It was here that Gloria and later David, were born. Most of my memories in this house centered on the radio we had in the living room. It was an Atwater-Kent radio with a base which had several large knobs, a separate speaker mounted on top, and two batteries beneath the table. One battery was called the "A" battery, the other the "B" battery. We were allowed to listen only at night since the batteries were expensive. Dad controlled the stations.

Since we were just kids, we had to go to bed early. I still recall hearing the radio as I lay in bed. For a long time I thought I heard a voice call out "Call for Kellogg's Corn Flakes." It turned out to be the bellboy giving his "Call for Phillip Morris." I also heard all about the Lindberg kidnapping through the filter of the bedroom door.

Chapter Two

School Days

My early recollection of starting to school begins when we lived on Oak Street, two houses south of the city bus barn. It started with the Kindergarten Roundup at Whittier School which I described earlier.

Beardshear School

By the time school started we were living at 618 13th Street, so when school actually started, I was assigned to Beardshear School. Mother took me to the building the day before classes started to meet my teacher. I was able to keep my clothes on this time, so I did not mind; in fact, I looked forward to going to school. The teacher showed me around the room, starting with a set of cubby-holes where we were to put our things. She explained that she had colors across the top of the rectangular boxes and pictures of animals down the left-hand side. I was to select my favorite color. I quickly chose orange. Then I was to pick out my favorite animal, and I chose the rabbit. She explained to me that my box in the future would be the Orange-Rabbit. Now I was a real student.

I attended kindergarten at Beardshear, with my mother walking with me the first week. By the second week I was an expert and could navigate myself.

Roosevelt School

A year later we moved again, this time to 619 13th Street, which was just across the street. My father told me later that this was the most miserable move of his life. Since we were only moving across the street, we did not pack anything. He carried everything over to the new house by himself, except for the larger items which required an extra hand. Apparently, this move caused us to be in a different district as I was assigned to Roosevelt School for first grade. Here I met Bob Swanson, Joan McElyea, and the others. I have a picture that I got from Bob, which showed the three of us sitting together on the front steps.

I have only a few recollections of school here. The Northwestern Grocery was across the street, and I frequently went there to buy penny candy. It was here that I learned that Fudgecicles, which sold for a nickel, sometimes had a stick that said FREE on it after the treat was eaten. One boy came to the store with his FREE stick and claimed his Fudgecicle. That gave me an idea. Maybe some "rich" guy might have come for a Fudgecicle and eaten it outside the store, dropping the stick beside the sidewalk. There were hundreds of different kinds of sticks there, so I started sifting through them all, hoping to find the one belonging to the "rich guy." Of course, I was not successful. There was one item sold at the store which I tried out. It came with a tissue paper outline picture of something and a colored piece of paper. When they were exposed to sunlight, the image was transferred to colored paper. I thought that was neat to copy a picture.

My recollection of the actual school time is limited to bits and pieces. I do recall the art classes where we cut up colored paper, doilies, and other things and had to paste them together. We were each given a paste stick, and this was used to dip into the huge glass jar of paste. The paste had a wintergreen flavor and smelled very good. Naturally, after I had applied the paste, I licked the excess paste from the stick and it tasted good. It was not uncommon for me to take a stick and gather up a bigger gob which I put into my mouth. Finally, a girl sitting next to me, complained to the teacher that "Edwin's eating the paste." That ended my experimenting with the paste.

Another day we were in a room and were given words to spell. Each kid was given a word and was asked to stand and spell the word. The words were small words like cat, dog, house, mother, and dad. I was able to handle my words but recall one girl getting the word who. She pondered for a bit and then I sang out the jingle that I had heard on the radio - "W H O on the Radio." The teacher got very provoked at me.

Colonial Bread Train

It was fall and we were in third grade when the Colonial Bread Train came to Ames. This was a small train with two cars and an engine. The train started at the school and we lined up for a ride. I got on a car, and the train went around town on the streets for a distance of about six blocks. When we got off the train, we each got a small loaf of Colonial bread, a pencil, a separate eraser, and a piece of candy. I ate the candy immediately and took the bread home. What a great day! I didn't want to lose my pencil and eraser, so I talked some kid into letting me climb up on his back to reach up into the crotch of a tree along the sidewalk toward home. There I put my pencil and eraser. I forgot all about it until much later. Then I had to find another kid willing to let me crawl up on his back to retrieve it. By then, the eraser was ruined. So much for being a miser.

My First Fight

Another time, on the way home from school I got into a fight with someone. The next day I was called to the principal's office where the other kid was waiting. I got a stern lecture from the lady and got worse when I got home. The worst thing was that I had to take a note home with me outlining my mischief. We didn't have a telephone. We could not afford one, and we used the phone at Mrs. Scott's house next door when we had an emergency. The only time I ever recall my mother using it was when the barn behind our house caught fire. Mother ran for the phone and called the fire department. Firemen arrived in time to confine the damage to only one corner of the barn. Mother warned me never to get in a fight again. And, I never did. I learned to avoid fights by not hanging around when the shoving phase started.

Boots Wanted

When I was in the third grade, I looked at the shoes that the other boys had and compared them with mine. Some wore better shoes than I, but the people that I really admired wore boots. Oh, how I wished that my parents would buy me a pair.

When we lived on 13th Street, I looked in the Montgomery Ward catalog and marked the things that I wished for. There were some toys, of course. A Red Ryder Daisy Air Rifle was a major item. But the pages that I spent the most time with were the pages showing the boots.

One special pair was marked as the most important gift that I wanted. They were brown cowhide boots with leather laces. The lower part had the laces pass through holes, but those in the upper part hooked around metal catches. On the right boot there was a little knife pocket with a snap cover. This would be the finest gift of all. How I wanted to put on a pair of those boots and hurry to the playground at school to show them off!

None of the items that I marked in the catalog were ever given to me. My parents probably would have tried to buy some of them if we had had any money left over. It took all that Dad could earn as a janitor at Iowa State College to pay rent and buy food and clothing. We just had to make do with what we had. Today I see how silly I was to want boots with a knife pocket. I should have been happy just to have shoes during those Depression Days.

Ink Day

When I was in the third grade at Roosevelt School in Ames, we sat at desks that had a round hole in the upper right corner of the desk, next to the indentation that held pencils. This hole was the ink well. The hole was usually empty except on Ink Day. If my memory serves me correctly, the Ink Day was on a Friday.

For penmanship class we were supposed to practice writing with ink. The janitor had prepared the ink by mixing powder and water. This he put into enough ink bottles for the entire room. The teacher walked

around the room distributing the red pen holders and one nib. The nib was a pen point that we each pushed into the red holder. This nib was then dipped into the ink bottle to carry the ink to the paper.

We practiced cursive writing by making the alphabet. We also learned how to make the capital letters. The capital Q always amazed me as it did not look at all like a "q." It looked similar to the digit "2." Then we practiced the Palmer Method by making strokes across one line, then circles across the other, all by one continuous movement. The circles reminded me of a sewer tile as you looked into one end.

I was never very graceful, so my slanted strokes caused me much problem with the upstroke. Sometimes, my pen point would dig into the paper, and that would cause a big ink blot in my strokes. I much preferred to practice the strokes and circles with a pencil.

Some of the boys were more aggressive than I. They would grab the hair braid of a girl sitting in front of them and try to stick it into the ink bottle. The girls would yell. The teacher would scold. The other boys would just chuckle. Another problem with Ink Day was that some of the boys would insert their nib into the pen holder and try to vaccinate the person sitting ahead of them. That also caused much distress to the teacher.

I can easily see why the teacher did not allow us to use ink every day. Today, with the wide availability of ball point pens, students are deprived of the art of using a pen point to write. Though I was not very graceful, some of the girls developed beautiful handwriting.

The first ball point pen that I ever saw was in 1945 when I was working at Spriggs Pharmacy in "Dogtown." A man by the name of Odem was flying around the world to promote his new pen which wrote with ink using a ball. Mr. Spriggs had one sample pen on a display card for customers to try. The pen sold for \$20.00. I do not recall anyone ever buying one. Today they are a give-a-way item used for advertising.

The "fountain pens" that we had available to us at that time were made by Schaeffer or Westbrook. They had a rubber sac inserted into a hollow pen barrel. The pen had a lever on the side which, when lifted up, squeezed the sac creating a vacuum. The pen was dipped into a bottle of ink and the lever was then pressed back down along the side of the pen. This way, the pen filled with ink. The better pens worked very well. They were available in narrow, medium, and wide point. One big problem developed when the sac started leaking. A shirt pocket would be stained with the ink that leaked out. The ink also spread on the hands of the user.

One other point that I recall about the ink bottles used to fill the "fountain pen" was that it was difficult to get the last of the ink out of the bottle. One company, called Quink, solved this problem by putting a piece of glass inside the bottle to form a little pocket. The pocket could be filled before opening the bottle by twisting the bottle to that side. Then when the bottle was open, the pocket held the needed ink regardless of how little was left in the bottle.

Today, fountain pens have all but disappeared from general use. On special occasions one can see a fine writing instrument in a desk set.

The Ames Zoo

I also recall, as a very young person, going to Brookside Park. First, I went with my parents, and we waded in the concrete wading pool that had a fountain in the center. We entered the park by crossing a swinging bridge. The big kids tried to get it swaying back and forth, so that when we tried to cross, we staggered. We had picnics here, played with the swings, the slides, the giant stride, the merry-go-round, and the other games. In later years, the city put an old red fire truck on the grounds for the kids to play on.

In the 1930's Ames kept a small zoo in the north part of the park. Several cages housed the animals. There was a brown bear, a couple of raccoons, two monkeys, and a red fox that were in cages. As I grew older, I recall riding my bike to the zoo to feed peanuts to the raccoons. This zoo was later removed, when it was

learned that people would go into the park at night and torment the animals. There always seem to be some people that mess it up for the others.

Bethesda Lutheran Church and Sunday School

My parents belonged to the Bethesda Lutheran Church at the corner of 7th and Kellogg in downtown Ames. Naturally, we kids were all enrolled in the Cradle Roll and then Sunday School when we were old enough to go.

Rev. Alvin Rogness was our family's favorite pastor. He lived in the parsonage just west of the church. The Sunday School teacher that I remember with fondness is Carrie Skrovig. She was what we would call a spinster. She owned a rooming house on Campus Avenue about a half-block from our house. She seemed to teach nearly every grade that I was in. It is probable that she taught two or three, but I do not recall any of the other teachers.

Miss Skrovig was stern in Sunday School, but she was a jolly lady when we saw her in our home. One year her class was held in the basement lobby area on the east side of the basement. It was not a good room to teach in, but she arranged to have a portable blackboard set up in the hall. She worked very hard to teach us how to sing the great Lutheran hymns. I recall "A Mighty Fortress is Our God" in particular. She would write a line of one verse on the board and explain to us what it meant. Then we would all sing it together several times. When we had it "down pat," she would go to the next line. When we had it memorized, she would combine the first two and we would sing. Eventually we were able to sing the hymn and know exactly what it meant. She worked very hard at her job.

Rev. Rogness decided that when we were in the Third Grade, we were going to get our Bibles. We had a mission study in Sunday School called the "Penny A Meal." we were encouraged to each try to save a penny for every meal that we ate. This was brought to Sunday School for missions. During this year, Rev. Rogness had our class sit in the front pew and take notes of his sermons. We turned these in to him at random times. I fear that he felt himself a failure when he read my notes. If there were any jokes, and there were few, then they got "big play." The important stuff just went over my head.

Before we were to get our Bibles, we were each supposed to write an essay entitled "A Penny A Meal" which told about its purpose. I wrote mine out longhand in pencil on lined paper. These were turned in to the pastor in advance. On the appointed Sunday, we were called up front and given our Bible; naturally, it was the King James Version. Our essays were handed back at the same time. I put my essay inside my Bible. When I got home I was proud of the Bible and showed Mother and Dad. Mother suggested that I glue my essay inside the front cover of the Bible. I had to cut the sheet down with scissors to make it fit. From that day on, I called my Bible the "Penny A Meal Bible."

There were many other pastors and many other Sunday School teachers during my years in Bethesda. These two stand out in my mind as really fine people.

Giant Strides

One piece of playground equipment that I enjoyed as a boy has disappeared. It was the Giant Stride. A large metal pole was placed in the ground. The top could be turned around like a top. From this top, several chains hung down. At the end of each chain, there were two metal bars, separated by about four inches, one above the other. A child could grab both bars, one with each hand and hang on to swing.

To get the Giant Stride moving, a child would hang on to the bars and run. When some speed was gained, the child would pick up their feet and swing free. If you ran in straight lines instead of around in a circle, you would swing out more violently. Of course, on the return swing, they would hit the pole. Imagine the action when you had about 8 kids, all running and swinging at the same time. There were many collisions with those trying to get started and with the center pole.

I imagine that the number of accidents and the worry about liability caused many cities to give up on the Giant Stride ride. It was fun while it lasted. Today's children are robbed of the thrill of the exciting ride.

Chapter Three

13th Street Days

Pigeons

Some pigeons were once given to us to raise for food. We put the crate of them in the back seat of the car, where they made a real mess. Mother cleaned it all up without much problem. I had visions of training them to be carrier pigeons. I thought it would be a neat way for me to send and receive messages from my very best friend, Paul Severson.

Dad built a set of cages in the side-yard. He showed me how to water and feed the pigeons. When they got bigger, we would be able to eat them. The idea of growing some of our food appealed to Dad. Dad took care of the pigeons, and we were able to raise quite a lot of them for about a year. I watched my mother once when she was ready to kill some for our supper. She reached in the coop and grabbed one. Then she closed the door to keep the others inside. I was upset as she took the pigeon by the neck in one hand and by the body with the other hand and wrung its neck. After she had killed several this way, she set about cleaning the birds.

That night as we sat down to eat, I found that I could not eat the pigeon pie that Mother had cooked. I complained about how cruel it was to kill them that way. It really bothered me that we were raising them to eat. About a week later, I went outside and opened the cages and shooed them all away. Mother noticed that the birds were all gone and asked if I knew anything about how they got loose. I told her that I did not want to see them with their necks rung again. She never said much to me but told my father when he got home. He went outside to check the cages. Then he came to me inside and told me that he and Mother had worked hard to raise the birds and it was a shame to see them wasted. He never really got angry with me. Soon, the pigeon cages were moved to the barn behind the house. We never again raised pigeons.

Orange Crate Furniture

When we lived on the south side of 13th Street, my sister Betsey and I shared a room. We had a bed but no other furniture. Dad collected orange crates from grocery stores and Mother went to work making curtains for them. Dad painted the outside of the crates and stood them on end to make shelves. My clothes went in one crate; Betsey had her own crate on the other side of the room. Dad tacked the curtains to the top of the crate to provide a cover for our shelves.

Though today it might sound crude, this actually gave us each a place to put our clothes. My overalls, pants, and shirts hung from a nail on the wall. Betsey had nails for her dresses on the other side of the room. We really got along quite well.

After we moved to West Street, when I was in 3rd grade, Dad got a dresser from someone and put it in the room that David and I shared. Betsey and Gloria had the orange crates. Many years later, when I was helping clean out Gloria's closet, I noticed that the orange crate was still there.

I don't want to give the impression that we were the only kids to have orange crate furniture. Other kids had desks, dressing tables, and other things made of these crates. They really functioned quite well. I recall seeing some neighbor kid who had a chair made from the crate. The sides were removed from the upper part of the crate. The seat was padded and the back was covered with cloth. It functioned quite well in those Depression years.

The Iceman

My first recollection of the iceman was when we lived on 13th Street in Ames, Iowa. The Gilcrest Ice Company gave us a colored card that measured about 8 inches square. The large numbers 25, 50, 75, and 100 were located around the edges of the card. Mother would decide how much ice she needed on a given day and put the sign in the front window, placing it so that it could be seen from the street. When the iceman came along, walking beside his horse-drawn wagon, he could see the sign and know how much ice was needed.

The horse would stop at each house. The iceman went to the back of the wagon, lifted up a heavy canvas flap that covered the back of the wagon, and pulled a 100-pound block of ice toward him. The ice was scored in both directions so that it could be cut into either two pieces for 50-pounds, four pieces for 25-pounds or left whole for 100 pounds.

As the iceman chipped the block with an ice pick, I would stand beside him and beg for any splinter of ice that came off the block. It was a treat to suck on the ice chip as I watched the man pick up the desired block of ice with his tongs and swing it up over his shoulder. He wore a rubber shield to protect his body from the cold, dripping ice. He could handle the 50 and 25 pound requests easily. I never did see him try to carry the whole 100 pound block in one trip, but I did see him carry 75 pounds once.

When he came into our house, he went directly to the back porch and opened the ice box. There was usually a small chunk of ice left in the ice compartment that had not yet melted. This piece was removed from its place and set atop the box while he worked the new block into the ice compartment. Then the small chunk was put back. Sometimes, there was not enough room for the small chunk, so the iceman would take out his pick and split it so that it would fit.

Sometimes my mother paid the iceman in cash. Many times we had a coupon book that was purchased from the Gilcrest Ice House on Lincoln Way. We could get more ice using the coupons than we could by paying cash. But, if we did not have the money to buy another coupon book, we had to pay cash.

The Goat That Got My Goat

In 1937 we moved across 13th Street in Ames from 618 to 619. My dad said, "That's the worst move that I ever made in my life. We ended up carrying everything out of the house and across the cinder road." This street marked the city limits on the north. The five acres of land looked attractive to my dad as a place where he could have a very large garden to feed his family, now grown to six.

Behind the small house was an old tumble-down barn on the east and two small, rickety sheds. Dad planted the huge garden and we settled into the old, cold and drafty house for the winter. The house consisted of only five rooms and a small bathroom off the kitchen. It was heated by two stoves; one was the standard kitchen range that we used in winter and summer, and the other was a large round pot-bellied stove standing about five feet tall in the inside corner of the living room. The latter had a small front door with a mica panel to let you look into the stove. I was fascinated to sit and watch the patterns the flames made in the shadows on the walls of the living room at night. Both bedrooms opened into this living room.

Both stoves required a lot of care. At nine years, I was the oldest of the four kids. It became my job to keep the coal scuttle filled with coal, the cob bins full of cobs, and to keep the kindling box on the back porch full of dry kindling. Dad used kindling to start the fire in the kitchen each morning, soaking a couple of small pieces in kerosene and then building a bed of cobs atop. The flames quickly built. Watching Dad start the fire many mornings I was constantly reminded with "Now don't ever let me catch you doing this, ever." The cobs were also used in the front room during the day. The coal ("... it was expensive as it came all the way from Centerville,") was used only at night to bank the fire to hold it over until morning.

Dad worked on the shed nearest the house making partitions in it to hold the kindling, the cobs, and the coal. Each morning and each evening I would be sent to the shed to get the bins and scuttle filled.

During that winter my mother became very seriously ill with a disease that was unfamiliar to me. It was "undulant fever" caused from drinking unpasteurized milk, and the doctors told my dad that Mother was to drink only goat's milk until she recovered.

Dad went somewhere and came walking back up the driveway leading a nanny goat by a long heavy rope tied around her neck. The goat plodded reluctantly along. Dad put the goat into the old barn temporarily and closed the door. Then he went to work on the second shed that was located about 40 feet north of the cob-and-coal shed. He cleaned it out and fixed up a door with a latch so it could be locked from the outside. Next he located some old fencing somewhere. He strung it on posts along both the east and west sides of the sheds, making a pen that was about 40 feet long and 12 feet wide. The pen was really a trapezoid as the two sheds were not the same width, but the goat never knew the difference. This way the goat could be let out during the day and could graze on the grass in the summer time. It became my job to let the goat out each morning, see that she had feed and water, and put her in the shed each evening. Dad checked up on me, but I usually did my job correctly.

In the spring when the grazing used up all of the grass inside the pen, it became my job to enter the pen locking the gate behind me. I would go to the shed and get the rope and tie it around the goat's neck and then open the gate and take the goat to the front yard. We lived on a hill which Dad called an embankment or more generally "the bank." I was to let the goat graze on the bank and the front yard. This was a horrible job to do each day. Sitting on my fanny in my front yard as the "dumb old goat" wandered around the yard was not my idea of a good time. I could hear my classmates running and yelling as they played across the street.

To show my contempt I began to abuse the goat by jerking on the rope, if she did not walk directly back to the pen. I slapped her on the rump if she hesitated to enter the gate, and I cracked her across the rump with the rope to make her move away from the gate, as I put the rope away and left the pen.

I grew to hate that goat. The constant demand on my time to exercise the goat, feed the goat, and water the goat quickly made me lose the excitement that usually came with each new animal we had.

During the next winter as I gathered the cobs and coal, I noticed a small hole in the shed opening into the pen. I peeked through the hole and saw the goat standing just outside the wall, probably attracted to the shed by the noise I was making. Inspiration hit me all at once. I could get even with the goat now. I located an old broom handle and put it into the hole and jabbed hard. I heard the goat scramble away from the wall. I watched as curiosity got the best of it and it came back again to investigate. Then I jabbed it again and again until it was time to go back to the house. The rest of the winter I made that goat's life miserable. If the goat wasn't in sight, I'd rattle the broom handle around the hole and the goat would come running to butt the wall.

The next spring, when the grass began to green up, I was drafted again to take the goat out on a rope to graze in front of the house. I did it the first time just like always. I locked the gate, got the rope from the shed, formed a loop and approached the goat and put it around her head and horns and then walked her to the gate and outside. After about an hour I jerked on the rope and pushed and shoved her back inside the fence. As soon as I had locked the door, I took the rope off her and put it back into the shed, shooed her from the gate, and turned to open it as usual. Then I heard the sounds of moving feet. I turned just in time to see the goat, head down, on a full run as it slammed me into the fence. I fell down and the goat backed up for another run. I couldn't get the lock open quickly enough between butts so I scrambled to climb up the fence. My screaming brought my mother on the run. When she saw the problem, she grabbed a broom from the back porch and came back waving it and yelling at the goat. She shooed it back far enough for me to open the lock and get out of the gate. She checked me over carefully as I wiped the tears from my face with a dirty hand and sniffed away the runny nose.

Mom asked, "What on earth caused that goat to attack you like that? She has always been so good and gentle."

My dad accompanied me the next several times as I entered and left the pen to make sure "... that dumb goat doesn't lose her head again." I never told my mother or dad the real reason, but I also never again poked the broom handle out of the hole again. We lived in peaceful co-existence, but I felt that I could never really trust her again. I suppose that she felt the same way about me. I had learned that the goat could eventually **get even!**

Stoves

Why in the world would anyone be thinking about stoves? Many times as I think back to my childhood, I recall the many types of stoves that my family used.

When we lived on Oak Street we had a gas plate that had three burners. Mother would strike a kitchen match and hold it over the burner, while she turned the porcelain knob in the front to ignite the gas. The matches were kept on the wall beside the stove in a match box holder. The kitchen matches were wooden sticks coated with a red substance on the tip. There was a white dot at the end of the tip, which would allow Mother to strike it anywhere. She usually just dragged it quickly along the front of the stove.

When she finished cooking, she always worried that the burners were turned off. Sometimes, when she was simmering something, she forgot. The flame did not show up in the daytime. She feared that she might start a fire. She checked the position of the knobs on the front to make sure they were all pointing straight out. This was the first - and the last - gas stove that she ever had.

Mother insisted that we were not going to continue to live in that house, so we moved to the front half of a house which was located just east of the high school football field. Today, that location is just east of what was then the high school athletic field. At this house we had a coal-fired furnace and a cook stove in the kitchen. We lived there for a short time until Dad found a house on 13th Street. Here we had a coal furnace and an electric stove. Mother was afraid of electricity, but it was nothing like her fear of gas.

Then we moved to the acreage across the street. It was an older house. Here we had a pot-bellied stove in the living room and a cookstove in the kitchen. Both stoves required coal, wood, or cobs. It was my job to keep the cob bucket filled every day, a stack of firewood on the back porch, and the coal skuttle filled with coal. The wood, coal, and cobs were stored in a small building in the back yard.

That cookstove felt great in the winter as the heat kept the house warm. But it was miserable in the summer. Some farmers had summer kitchens or cook houses. The only thing we could do was open all of the windows and doors.

Eventually we moved to West Street in Dog Town. Here we had the coal-fired furnace in the basement. Mother and Dad bought a new kerosene stove for the kitchen. It is this stove that I remember best. There were four burners on the left side of the stove that were used for general cooking. Two more were located at the right side under the oven. The baking was done here.

A long pipe running through the stove connected the burners with a kerosene tank outside of the stove. This tank was a one gallon glass bottle with a screw-on lid. In the top of the lid was a spring and a rod. When the filled bottle was inverted and placed in the holder, the rod was pushed up into the bottle, letting the kerosene flow into the pipe.

Each burner had a handle that controlled the flow. The kerosene soaked a cylindrical wick which was lighted with a match. The flow of kerosene was controlled by the knob which raised and lowered the wick. If the wick was high, the heat would be greater. If the wick was low, the heat would be less. If the wick disappeared into the burner, the burner was shut off.

Dad had a kerosene can which we kept on the back porch of the house. It was my job to keep the glass tank filled whenever it was less than half full. My instruction from Dad was to take the glass tank into the back

yard, carry the kerosene can outside, and fill the tank. Then I put the tank back on the stove and returned the can to the back porch after putting the screw caps back on it.

When the kerosene in the can was gone, I would go to Mother who would find 14 cents. She tied the 14 cents into the corner of a handkerchief and sent me to the filling station at the corner of Hyland and Lincoln Way. I usually pulled the can in my wagon when I was little, as the filled can was too heavy for me to carry all the way home.

Dad had a large cast iron square made which was one inch thick. This iron was placed over the four burners on the stove whenever my Mother made lefsa, a Norwegian bread. Each fall, Mother spent many days baking the lefsa.

When I was in high school, my parents bought an electric stove for the kitchen. They could not part with the kerosene stove that served us so well, so they moved it into the storeroom. This room, in which my brother, David, and I slept for several years, was actually an addition to the house. The lefsa continued to be baked in this room until my Mother died. This stove was also used to heat the wash water. Dad placed a copper boiler on the stove, and it became my job to fill the boiler with water each week for Mother to wash clothes.

It is hard to think, today, that we washed clothes only one day a week. You need to recall that it was a major task that took all day, when you used a wringer washer and dried the clothes outdoors on a line.

The Day My Dad Set His Pants On Fire

Our house was located on top of a hill. The front yard was all grass which we could not mow easily. Later we had a goat to help keep the grass down, but in the early days we just let the grass grow. When it got too tall and Dad feared the neighbors might complain, he got his scythe and sharpening tool from the barn and headed for the front "bank," as we called it. Since I tagged along, I was given a sickle. Dad put me to work on a small part of the yard as he went to work on the rest of the grass. It was a very hot day and he removed his shirt. He only wore overalls, which were called "bib overalls." There was one very small pocket in the bib in which he put several kitchen matches. These he usually called "farmer" matches. He also had a ten dollar bill in that pocket, though I did not know it at the time. Ten dollars was a lot of money when he made only \$72.00 for a month of work.

As he scythed back and forth in a tireless motion I was amazed at how the grass would fall behind the big scythe. He stopped frequently to wipe his forehead with a large handkerchief. Then he would take up the sharpener and stroke the blade to keep it sharp. I watched the operation as I worked on my small patch. I would stop, take out my handkerchief, and wipe my head as I mimicked his motions.

One time, as Dad leaned the handle of the scythe against his chest to take out his handkerchief, the matches ignited and set his overalls on fire. He dropped the scythe and jumped up and down beating on his chest. I could not figure out what was wrong. I thought that maybe a bee had stung him. Soon he unfastened the straps of the overalls. They dropped to the ground where he stomped on them with his feet to put out the fire. I was shocked to see him standing there wearing only his undershorts.

After he had snuffed out the fire, he put his overalls back on. There was a hole in the center of the bib. He dug his fingers around in the hole and pulled out a rolled up ten dollar bill, part of which had burned up. We both went back in the house to report to Mother. Mom and Dad unrolled the bill on the kitchen table and examined it. Part of it was intact, but some was burned beyond salvaging. Dad took the part of the bill and went to the bank to ask what could be done. A cashier assured him that since more than half of the bill was saved, it could be exchanged for another bill. Our money was saved. Dad still had the hole in his pants which Mother covered with a patch.

When I Got Sick

When I was a kid living on 13th Street in Ames we were quite poor. I never recall going to see a doctor until after 3rd grade. My mother had ideas of how to take care of the routine illnesses that we had, and we had many.

Each spring and fall we were all called into the house and lined up for our dose of cod liver oil. Mother had a tablespoon, and she poured a spoonful into each of our mouths. I protested because of the smell and also the awful aftertaste after I gagged it down. That taste was so bad that I actually shivered. Mother told us that cod liver oil was needed to build up our blood after a winter. In the fall we were supposed to build up our blood for the coming winter. Later, we were given our dosage in a small football shaped capsule, which went down easier but caused me to belch an awful taste later after it had melted.

Today I do not know why sometimes I was given castor oil from a spoon. It, too, was awful and I complained loudly when she gave it to me. I think it was intended as a laxative.

Most of the summers I ran around barefoot. We were encouraged to save our shoes for school. I had only one pair. When I outgrew them, Mother tried to find a neighbor boy slightly bigger than I to see if I could get his cast off pair. Since she had to provide shoes for four children, I am sure it was a constant struggle. Whenever I did wear shoes, like to Sunday School, Mother constantly complained whenever I dragged my shoes and got them scuffed up.

When I was barefoot, you can imagine the problems I had when at play. Frequently I would step on glass, tin cans, or something with sharp edges and cut my foot. Mother would always have me put my foot in the kitchen sink so she could scrub it with soap and water. Then she would put on Mercurochrome, a red alcohol-based liquid, which she felt would protect me from infection. Then she would wrap my foot in a bandage made of a torn sheet. Many times the sheet would get so dirty and so loose that I finally took it off. It is amazing today when I look back that I did not get serious infection.

A few times, when playing in old piles of wood, I would step on a nail. Generally, it really hurt me so I quickly sought help from her. Again she cleaned it up in the sink, then she made a milk poultice which she tied to my foot. I then had to stay off the foot until it got a chance to clean up the infection. She never gave a thought to Tetanus shots, which are a routine today when I get serious cuts or stitches. Again, I never recall having a problem with my foot, but the poultices had to be changed every day.

The worst mess of all, as far as I was concerned, was what she did to me when I developed a bad cough. She was a firm believer in asafetida bags. These were smelly bags with onions and other bad smelling substances in them. She felt that the evil smells would keep the germs from me. This bag was tied around my neck when I went to school. I can assure you that the other kids stayed away from me. I recall having to wear one when I attended Beardshear School and again when I was transferred to Roosevelt School. By the time I got to Welch School I convinced her that I needed none.

If my nose got plugged up Mother was there instantly with the Vicks Vaporub jar. It was a stinky, greasy substance that came in a blue jar. This was rubbed on my neck, my chest, and gobs were pushed up my nose. Mother wrapped a woolen sock around my neck after she coated it with Vicks. Actually, it generated some heat and made me feel better. It was hard to play with my friends whenever I had a woolen sock wrapped around my neck. I did notice that sometimes other kids also had socks wrapped around their necks, too.

I will mention only one more thing that Mother used on me when I was ill. If I had a fever, she would take my temperature - rectally, of course, as I lay across her lap. Then she would ask me if I had any pain in my side. If I said "no", she pushed me into the bathroom and got out the dreaded enema bag. It hung behind the door of the bathroom in our West Street house. A long hose was attached to the bottom of the red rubber bag. A spring clamp pinched the hose shut. Mother heated water on the stove (we had hot water only in the winter when the furnace was in use). She poured the water in a pan, heated it to lukewarm, and got out a bar of soap and made suds. Then she removed the black screw-in stopper from the top and filled

the bag with the soapy water. She put Vaseline on the black tip of the hose (thank heavens) and told me to bend over the bathtub. Guess where she put that tip? Yes, in my bottom. When it was properly inserted she unfastened the metal clip and warm soapy water filled my insides. She kept running the water in until I figured it would "back up to my eyeballs." Finally, I was allowed to sit on the stool. This practice was used on my brother and sisters as well. I must admit that it always brought our temperatures down.

One bit of humor about my little brother, David. He hated the enemas as much as I did, and Mother usually had to catch him first. One summer day, when he was probably about five or six years old, he wandered up the street when he heard the fire trucks. There was a fire about a block from our house on Hyland Avenue. Mother started looking for David since he disappeared. She asked me if I had seen him and I replied that I had not. She told me that I had to help her find him. As we got to the bottom of the steps in front of our West Street house, we saw David running for home as fast as he could. He ran straight to Mother and blurted out, "Mom, you should have seen the big enema that the firemen have." We both laughed at that.

The Red Cross Drives

Each fall, our school would hold a Red Cross drive. The teachers would announce the drive a few days in advance. We were each encouraged to save some coins to bring to the teacher. Each class collection would then be tallied and the room with the greatest amount would be announced the winner.

On the appointed day, we would each walk up to the teacher's desk and turn in our money. I usually gave only a nickel. Some of the kids gave up to 50 cents. As we turned in our money, the teacher handed us a tin circle that was painted white. In the center of the circle, there was a red cross. A little tab was connected to the circle, which we could bend back to fasten the button to our shirts.

Today, as I tour antique shops I see these Red Cross buttons from so long ago.

Gypsies and Hoboes

During the 1930's, years that we lived at 619 - 13th Street in Ames, I became aware of the gypsy bands that roamed the countryside. We lived near the corner of 13th and Grand Avenue, which was Highway 69. I recall sitting on Logsdon's hill, on the corner and the house directly west of ours, and watching the horse drawn wagon with rubber tires passing along. One man was driving from a seat in the front; the wooden sides of the wagon were curved around the top. I noticed several young kids peering out of the wagon. A group of older kids were walking alongside the wagon along with the mothers. The mothers had colorful scarves on their heads and around their necks. I thought the whole procession interesting so I watched until they were out of sight.

Then I ran home and reported what I saw to my mother. She became alarmed and checked on the other three kids to see if they were all playing in the yard. Then she told me to stay away from those people. They were gypsies and would steal children and take them along with them. I was sufficiently warned, but I wondered to myself if traveling along with them might be rather exciting.

About that same time a ragged older man came to our door and asked to talk to my mother. I ran and got her from the kitchen and stood alongside her while she talked to the man through the screen. We asked if she had any scissors or knives to sharpen, any wood to cut, or anything else that he might do for a meal. She agreed with the scissor sharpening and produced two pairs for him. He sat on the porch and went to work on them.

Then Mother fixed him a plate of food and took it out to him on the porch. She served him as he sat on the porch with his feet dangling over the edge. She then took coffee out to him. After he was finished, she gave him a piece of cake and he returned her scissors. She was impressed with her scissors as she tried them out.

We had several hoboes come to our house from time to time. Someone later told us that the hoboes had some kind of signal to identify houses where they were successful in getting a meal. The last time that I saw what might have been a hobo occurred when I was in third grade. By this time we had moved to 2907 West Street in "dog town," as we called it. A man came to sharpen my mother's knives. She served him French toast and coffee on our front porch.

Ames Popcorn Stands

As a kid growing up in Ames during the early 1930's, I vividly recall the Saturday nights when families would get in their cars and head for downtown. The early arrivals would find a parking spot on Main Street; we usually parked on the south side in the 300 block. Two grocery stores were located on the north side.

Mother would go off shopping while Dad hung around the car to talk with other arrivals. I was allowed to roam up and down the street, always checking back in, or as Mother always said, "We know where to find you when we are ready to leave." My little sister, Betsey, would have to tag along with Mom.

I walked along the street looking in all of the store windows. What wonderful things there were! If only we had some money maybe I could talk Mother and Dad into buying them.

Sometime during the evening I could usually beg a nickel from Mom. She controlled the money, sometimes tying it up in the corner of her handkerchief. Then I would run to the popcorn stand operated by Billy Rhoades. The stand was located in the street alongside the curb at the corner of Kellogg and Main. The closest building was the Ames Savings and Loan. From that building, electricity was connected to the top of the stand.

Billy was a blind man that seemed to know just about everyone in the town. Everyone stopped to talk with him as they bought the popcorn. The popper was located at the north end of the stand. After Billy put the oil and corn into the popper, he closed the lid. On top of the lid a handle was turned by a clown figure which was fastened to the handle. It looked like the clown was actually turning the handle that stirred the corn. When the corn started popping, the big lid would be pushed up and corn would start spilling out. Finally he turned another handle and the corn would be dumped out into an aromatic pile. That smell carried up and down the street.

I watched the whole operation with amazement. Billy would fill the sacks, pass them to the customers, and make the change. I wondered how he could keep his money straight. He kept the coins carefully sorted into trays. The bills presented a bigger problem, but he had them sorted. If someone gave him a bill, he assumed that it was a one-dollar bill. In those days the bills were almost always "a one." If a person gave him something bigger, he would ask what denomination it was. Usually someone would step up to verify the bill.

It appeared to me that someone could give him a bill and say it was a \$5 when it was only a \$1 bill, but I never saw that happen. Perhaps in those times people tended to be always honest. Billy's business thrived at that location for many years. He lived with his wife, also a blind person, in a house on the south side of Ninth Street near the railroad viaduct. When I passed his house on my bike as I rode from my home in Campustown, which we called Dogtown, to Downtown, by way of the cinder path, I would see them about in their yard. In later years Billy had a route of bubble gum machines that many merchants placed in their stores for him to care for.

Another popcorn stand was operated by a sighted man just off Main Street at the corner of Douglas and Main Street. I never wandered up that far east, so I cannot report about his operation. During the 1940's, I frequented another popcorn stand on Welch Avenue just south of Lincoln Way. It was located on the west side of Welch, near Hostetter's, a restaurant. This was a popular spot for the students, most of whom traveled on foot. A man and his wife operated this shop. Many times my friend, John Bradish, and I would stop for popcorn as we toured the area in the evenings. Sometimes we would even stop there on our way home at night, eating popcorn and spilling a path of corn as we walked home.

Today, as I drive around these locations, I notice that most of the traffic is by car. There would not be enough foot traffic to support a popcorn stand today. Another thing that would deter these stands today is the probable vandalism. There was never any evidence of anyone tampering with the shops in the 1930's and 1940's.

Ames Public Library

The Ames Public Library was a wonderful place for any kid, and it still is today. I first became acquainted with the library when I was about eight years old. We lived in Campus Town and I had read most of the books in the school library. Mother took me by bus to the library. She spoke with Aletha Davidson, the librarian who helped me get a library card. Miss Davidson took me to the children's section, which was located on the west end of the library.

She first took me to the diorama, as I believe it is called. It was a glassed-in case that held a display of scenes and characters from popular stories. This display was changed about every two or three months. A small bench was located in the front for the little children to stand on. Even as an adult, I continue to stop by the display.

Then she took me to the bookshelves and showed me where I might find the books that I wanted to read. Finally, she took me to a place where I could find book lists. These lists were prepared by teachers for the children to learn what books would be acceptable for book reports. I selected several books on that first trip.

The rest of the time, I was allowed to take the bus to the library, browse to my heart's content, and select the books that I was required to read. After the required reading was finished, I wandered about the shelves looking for other stories to try out. Gradually, Miss Davidson got acquainted with me. Nearly always, when she was not busy, she would seek me out and ask how I was doing with my reading. She was ready to recommend some book that I had not considered. Then I grew to the point where I would seek her out when I wanted some new ideas.

One day, as I was sitting on the floor examining the books, she came to me and told me that she wanted to show me a new section. This time we left the children's room and went to some shelves behind the adult circulation desk. She pointed out several sections where I might find appropriate books. From that day forward, I never lacked for something to read.

After graduation from high school, I entered the service. I enlisted in the Army and was sent to Japan for Occupation duties in August, 1946. I found that the small base I was assigned to in Military Government had no library at all. My source of reading materials had dried up. One letter that I wrote to Mother told of my predicament.

Imagine my surprise one day to receive a huge wooden crate from the Ames Public Library. A letter from Miss Davidson accompanied the books. She told me that my mother passed along my letter, so she decided to have a crate made and filled with books. Her instructions were to share them with my companions. I was to ship them back when we had finished with them. I spoke with my immediate superior, an Army Captain. He looked the crate over and told me that I could keep it in my room. I was living in a building with about 30 other guys, so I announced the "library" one night in the mess hall after dinner.

The guys would come in, find a book, put the title and their name on a slip of paper, and then take the book. When they finished with it, they returned the book to the crate and removed their slip of paper. I imagine that we had the crate of books for at least six months. I announced, again in the mess hall, that it was time to ship the books back home. The guys returned all of the books. I nailed the lid back on the crate and contacted the Army Post Office in Nagoya, Japan. They picked up the crate and shipped it back to the United States by ship. I do not recall how much it cost me to send it back, but it was not terribly expensive. We were able to send letters by writing Free in the space where the stamp usually went. I doubt that the whole crate cost me more than \$10.00.

I really cannot imagine Miss Davidson actually sending me the books. It certainly did not follow the usual rules for checking out a book. Such a thing could not possibly happen today. But, I was most grateful to Miss Davidson for sending me some good reading when I was in the service. My fellow barracks-mates also were able to benefit from them.

A Christmas Past

When I was a boy of eight I eagerly anticipated Christmas. We lived on the north side of 13th Street in Ames, which was just outside the city limits. The house stood on a hill on 2 acres of ground. The house was old; the windows leaked the cold air of winter. One of my regular jobs was to carry in cobs from a small cob shed in the back. This Christmas Eve I hurried back to the house through the snow with the skuttle of cobs, then returned to the barn for a load of wood for my mother to use to keep the woodstove going in our living room. This one stove took care of my mother's and dad's bedroom, my little brother's and sister's bedroom, and the kitchen. Betsey and I slept on a daybed in the corner of the living room. The daybed folded up into a couch during the day, opening to a bed at night.

After my chores were done, I sat by the window watching for Dad to come home. He worked as a janitor for the college, a job that he recently had gotten. He worked ten hours a day for six days a week for \$72.00, so there was never much money for our family of four kids. Except when it was very cold, Dad walked the two miles each way to work to save the bus fare which cost 5 cents a trip. Since this was Christmas Eve, Dad told mother that he would probably take the bus home. The bus stop was located at the corner of 13th Street and Grand Avenue, across the street from the Skelly Oil Station. I waited and watched as the darkness fell. It seemed to take so long tonight of all nights.

Finally, I spotted the brake lights of the bus come on, saw my Dad get off the bus, and walk back to our house in the street, as we did not have sidewalks on our side of the street. I yelled to Mother, "Here he comes," and I raced to the kitchen. Mother had cooked dinner and was holding it on the back of the range. The table was set and we were ready.

"Can I turn on the Christmas tree lights now?" I asked.

"Yes, you can," she told me. We were told not to turn them on until it was really dark outside to save on the electric bill. I raced to the tree, which was not really a tree, but made up to look like one. A wooden pole had many wires wrapped around it; each wire was covered with green material to resemble pine branches. The string of 8 lights came on. If one of the bulbs burned out, then the whole string went out and we had to go through the process of inserting a new bulb for any bulb in the string. If it lighted, that bulb was the bad one. Usually the first try did not work, so we took the bulb we had removed and put it into the next place, and so on until we finally got the string to light. It looked beautiful to me. Our new ornaments glistened in the reflected lights. They were really new at the end of the previous year. One of them had a center band of orange with a white band on each side. The message "Christmas 1936" was printed in the center. I assumed that this was my ornament - for me only - as my mother and dad knew that orange was my favorite color.

There were four packages under the tree. One was for me, and one each for David, Gloria, and Betsey. There was none for Mother or Dad. I figured that David's package would be wasted because he was only one year old, and he couldn't do anything anyway. Besides, he was sick this Christmas.

Dad hurried into the house, leaving his overshoes on the back porch and entering the kitchen. He hung his heavy wool coat on a hook in the kitchen and went to wash up. We gathered at the table, Mother holding David in her lap. We had soup for our supper. I hurried the whole family along, as I knew that when we were finished we would open our gifts, and I was most eager to know what was in my package. It was usually my job to clear the table and help with the dishes while Dad rested in the front room beside the stove. Tonight Dad announced that we would all gather beside the tree and open our gifts and that he would do the dishes alone afterwards. This was a practice that he continued into the later years.

Mother passed out the gifts. She helped David open his package. Then we went along to Gloria and Betsey in that order. I impatiently waited because I didn't really care what they got. Finally, it was my turn and I ripped open my package. It was a train. Dad helped me arrange the circular track and put the engine, one car, and a caboose on the tracks. There was a wind-up key on the side of the engine, which he taught me to wind. Every other cross piece of the track stuck up and caught a part of the train which rang a bell as the train went round and round the track. I was transfixed as the train circled with a ding-ding noise. Then Mother came out with another unwrapped gift for each of us. There was clothing for Betsey and Gloria, something for David, and - Wow! - a green Indian blanket for me. Then she gave each of the three older kids an orange. This was a real treat as we never had fresh fruit in the winter.

Very late that night, after my brother and sister had gone to bed, I sat on the floor in the living room eating some candy from the box that I got at the church program when I said my "piece." I held the orange. I figured out that it was my favorite fruit since it was also orange in color. I wrapped myself in the Indian blanket and watched the train go in circles. I pondered why the train said "Union Pacific" on it. Do you suppose that they had another whole train for "Potato Pacific?" It was days later when I asked my mother about that, and she laughed and told me that it was Union Pacific - Onion was spelled starting with an O. That Christmas was the best Christmas that I could remember. I didn't have to help with the dishes. I got my very own train and my own special blanket. I had my own 1936 ornament, and I got an orange. Nobody could have had a better Christmas.

Highway Signs and Sights

Some signs that I recall seeing along the roads in Iowa during the early 1930's included these:

THINK signs that an insurance company put up at the scene of an accident. On Highway 69, north of Ames on the Randall curve, there were 13 signs in a row. That signified that there were 13 fatal accidents at the spot. One of these signs was put up when the mother of a classmate, Richard Hegland, was killed.

All highways had curbs along the sides to control the flow of water when it rained. Later, these were all removed when it was determined that drivers would veer into the other lane when they strayed too far to the right. One of the last highways in Iowa to remove these curbs was Highway 2 in southern Iowa.

Speed Limit Reasonable and Proper. This message appeared on signs just north of Ames on U. S. 69 and indicated that the driver could resume speed as long as it was reasonable and proper. This was later changed to a certain number of miles per hour. I imagine that the message Reasonable and Proper was interpreted many different ways, according to who was doing the driving.

Burma Shave signs. I recall watching carefully for these signs. They each had a part of some limerick on them and were spaced along the road, so that you could read them as you drove by. The last sign in the string said "Burma Shave." Here are a few examples.

Candidate says	The whale put Jonah	Altho insured
Campaign confusing	Down the hatch	Remember kiddo
Babies kiss me	But coughed him up	They don't pay you
Since I've been using	Because he scratched	They pay your widow
Burma Shave	Burma Shave	Burma Shave

Lydia Pinkham's Pills. These signs were painted along the sides of a barn that was located near the highway. They advertised the pills which were intended for ladies. I used to call them "Pink Pills for Pale People."

Tractors With Lugs Prohibited. This sign was also located just north of Ames, but I recall seeing them in many places. I used to think that the sign message was very funny as I thought that "lugs" were really stupid people. "Big Lug" meant that they were big and stupid. Imagine a sign that would not allow stupid people to drive. Actually, the old tractors had solid steel wheels with big lugs attached to give better

traction in the fields. These would cause much damage to the roadway. Today these signs are not needed as the tires are all rubber and have lugs made of the same material.

Eat Gas. This sign was cleverly arranged so that EAT was written horizontally and GAS was written vertically, sharing the center letter "A". I used to laugh at these signs, because it indicated that if you ate in that restaurant, you would eat gas. I had enough problem with gas without having to eat it.

Speed Zone Ahead. This sign warned you that you were going to have to slow down soon. Today, one of these signs really makes one wonder. Isn't all of the roadway now governed by a speed zone? You are actually in a speed zone when you encounter the sign. The 65 miles per hour is the legal limit on the Interstate in Iowa. If you are traveling 65 mph, then you are in a speed zone right then. Perhaps a better sign might be Reduced Speed Zone Ahead, which is what the message implies.

Non Inflammatory. This sign was painted on the back of tank trucks hauling gasoline in Ames in the 1930's. Each gas truck also had a chain that hung down the back of the truck to drag on the ground. Its purpose was to control static electricity that was built up by the action of the gasoline in the tank. Somewhere along the way, the chains disappeared. I have not noticed an increase in the number of tank trucks that have exploded. At another time, someone must have questioned the Non Inflammatory sign because I began to see the sign Inflammatory. When you think about it, Non Inflammatory is a double negative. That is why the sign Inflammatory appeared. Still later I began to see the signs Flammatory. I think that someone figured out that Inflammatory might mean that it was not flammatory. Ah, the problems of saying exactly what you mean!

One sign in Hamilton County amuses me but makes sense. I was driving to the Neese Cemetery in the southwestern part of the county. A short stub of road turned west into the cemetery. A sign was posted along the stub road said, "**Dead End.**" I noticed this also in Story County as I passed a country cemetery.

When I hitchhiked to Des Moines when I was a child I usually passed by a very large sign north of Euclid Avenue on East 13th that said "**Electricity is Cheap in Des Moines.**" I wondered how long that sign would stay up, because someday it might get to be more expensive. Today it is gone.

Another sign that I frequently saw was a banner that hung below the marquee of theaters that boasted "**20 Degrees Cooler Inside.**" This was before the days of air-conditioning. Some theaters had a system of running cool water from the ground into pipes inside the theater. Air was then blown through the pipes to cool the air.

Family Cars

My father had a Model T Ford that we used for transportation from my earliest memory. It was a coupe that was started by cranking. My father would set the spark and throttle by moving levers on the sides of the steering wheel. Then he would put one leg inside of the front bumper and pull on a wire loop as he began to crank. He told me the wire loop was a choke. I couldn't imagine how you could get anything to go by choking it.

After a couple of cranks, the car would start. He hurried to the driver's seat and released the hand brake while pushing in the pedals on the floor. There were three pedals; the left one was held in three different positions. "All of the way in" was low gear, "half way out" was neutral, and "all of the way" out was high gear. Another pedal (I think it was the middle one) was reverse. It seems to me that in order to back up, Dad pushed the left pedal half-way in and then pushed the reverse pedal all the way in. The right pedal was the brake. Dad would start in low gear, then let the pedal out for high gear. He managed the speed with the throttle lever on the steering wheel shaft. At the time of this car there were only four of us in the family: Mother, Dad, Betsey, and me. Mother would hold Betsey in her lap. I would sit in the middle, but usually I stood up on the wooden floorboard so I could see better.

Dad drove very slowly. When he needed to buy gas, we went to Smith's Oil Station on Lincoln Way. The attendant would ask Dad how much gas he wanted to buy. I recall that the cost was about 14 cents a

gallon, but we got a cheaper price if we bought five gallons. Mother wanted Dad to shop there because they gave dish towels sometimes. Other times they would give dishes, one piece each time we came in.

The attendant would push and pull a long lever back and forth on the side of the tank to pump gasoline up into a glass cylinder. The cylinder was marked in one gallon increments up to 10 gallons. If Dad asked for five gallons, the attendant would pump gas until the shield-shaped marker with a 5 on it would be covered up to the line. Then the attendant would lift the driver's seat, remove the cap from the gas tank, insert the hose into the tank, and then squeeze a lever that released the gas. Dad would pay him 70 cents and Mother would collect her towels.

Some Sundays we would all get in the Ford and head for Huxley to visit my grandparents, A. E. and Maggie Nass. It was an adventure for me to take the nine-mile trip. If it was rainy, I would be allowed to help run the windshield wipers. The wiper blade was only on the driver's side of the car. It consisted of a blade on the outside and a lever on the inside attached at the top. By hand, one would move it back and forth to clean the windshield. When it was not needed, it was supposed to be pushed up and fastened by friction to keep it out of the way. In practice, many times it just dangled in front of the driver. I would guess that if we were in a real hurry, Dad might drive at 25 miles an hour. Mother was always telling him to "slow down - we might have an accident."

This Ford was kept for many years. We got it when we lived on Oak Street near the bus barns. We still had it when we moved to a house south of Lincoln Way and just east of the school athletic field. I recall riding in the car until it got cold in the fall. Then Dad would block up the four wheels just high enough to keep the tires off the ground. Then he would drain the radiator. If we decided to go to Huxley on a nice day, Dad would jack the car up and off the blocks. Mother would heat water in a tea kettle on the stove. Dad would close the drain plug on the engine and pour the hot water into the radiator. Then he quickly cranked the car to get it going before the water got too cold. When we arrived in Huxley, he would drain the radiator. When we were ready to return to Ames, he would again pour hot water into the radiator and crank the car to get it started to keep the water from freezing. Back home in the evening, he would drain the radiator again, and put the car back up on the blocks.

To get around town, we usually walked or took the bus. The car was mostly used when we went visiting in good weather. Almost always on Saturday nights, we would take the Ford uptown to Main Street. We would plan to get there early to get a good place to park. Dad would then visit with the other men while their wives shopped. We kids would scurry about the stores looking at all of the things we wished we could afford to buy. If it was winter, we took the bus.

Eventually we moved to the south side of 13th Street. The address was 618. The house is still standing there today. When we moved there Dad traded the Model T for a Model A. This sedan had a back seat, which became necessary as the family grew when Gloria and David were born. This car had a battery to start it, but when it failed, Dad still could crank it. It was during this time that dad was cranking and cussing when the car backfired, and the crank went in reverse. It broke his arm. After that time he was more careful when cranking it.

This car allowed us to travel a bit further. I recall a couple of trips to Kanawha to visit my Aunt Clara and Uncle Ben.. The back seat could be removed, and the tire patching equipment and tools went back there. Mother had me put a first aid kit there also. The suitcases were put on the running board. They were held in place by a wire gate that could expand to hold the suitcases. Dad would drive this car at a steady 35 miles an hour after we got out of town. I was scolded if I tried to read a map or paper, as my parents worried that a gust of wind might blow them in front of Dad's eyes and he could not see.

We did drive this car in the winter sometimes as Dad had put alcohol in the radiator. He told me that it would keep the radiator from freezing down to a certain temperature. If there was a forecast for very cold weather, he still had to drain the radiator. We still had this car when we moved to West Street when I was in third grade.

One night as Dad was coming home, the car wiring caught on fire. He managed to get the fire put out with his bare hands, but the wiring was ruined. Some men helped him push the car into the garage behind our house on West Street. There it sat for many years. He was told that the car had to be completely rewired, and we just could not afford it. It sat in the garage, that I called the barn, all during the war years. Dad had put it up on blocks and poured oil into each of the four cylinders to keep them from rusting.

That car was the last one he ever owned. He sold it to some lady after the end of World War II. She said she wanted to buy it and go to be with her husband in Texas. A wrecker came to tow it to the garage where she had it rewired.

Oh, how I wish that I had that car today!

Quarantined Again

By the time my brother, David, was born, my folks found out that at least one of their four kids would be sick with some kind of ailment all of the time. Betsey and I brought most everything home that was going around in the schools. Then it spread to Gloria and David.

Ames had a practice of quarantining houses when the children contracted certain diseases such as chicken pox, whooping cough, measles, and mumps. These come to my mind now, but I am sure there were others, too. The city health officer would come to our house and post a large orange sign near our front door that said "WARNING - Mumps Within" or WARNING - Measles Within." There were smaller words of warning giving the period of time that the quarantine was in effect. The health office signed the poster at the bottom. Each sign was a different color to distinguish at a distance what kind of disease lay within the four walls. At the end of the time, the public health officer took the old sign down, indicating that it was safe for others to come into our house again.

One time, Mother recalled later, the officer came to take down one sign and put another up in its place for another disease. We seemed to live for years with those signs.

The last quarantine that I recall occurred when Betsey was seven years old. She was ill with what was later diagnosed as a brain tumor. Mother moved her into the front bedroom and stayed with her almost all of the time. Gloria and David brought some new disease home that called for another quarantine. Mother knew that the school would alert the health officer, so she told Dad, "Get Edwin out of the house until this one ends so he can keep going to school."

Dad sent me to school in the morning with the message that I was supposed to come to the Mechanical Engineering Building after school instead of going home. "Come to work and find me," he told me.

By the time school was out, I headed home first to check out the house. Sure enough there was a large yellow poster nailed to the side of the house giving warning for everyone to stay away from the Nasses. I scooted over to Dad's building and wandered through it to find Dad. He took me to the Industrial Arts Building, passing through a large room that had an overhead crane; it ran on an I-beam track fastened to the ceiling. He went into a small room on the west side and told me to come in.

This was a small room that might have been an office. There was one window that faced a brick wall of another building. He had equipped this room with two army cots which were made up for us with brown army blankets. A suitcase held clothes for me. Dad had all of his clothes in a cardboard box which he shoved under his bed. This was to be our home for the next two weeks. I went each evening to the Mechanical Arts Building next door to shower in an upstairs shower room. The shower was a novelty, but the idea of showering in a big room with lots of other naked people bothered me. I turned my back to them and showered in a corner shower and made it a fast one. The water spray came from the overhead faucet with such force that the water pellets stung my body.

We cooked our meals in the room over an electric hotplate that Dad borrowed from someone. We ate lots of cans of beans and meats. One time Mother called Dad and told him to send me to the back door of our

house, and she would leave a good meal of chicken and noodles out there for us. I hurried home, climbing up on the concrete embankment that surrounded our house on three sides. I peeked into the front bedroom window to get a look at Betsey. When I tapped on the glass, she turned her head toward me. She waved her hand, but she was not able to get out of bed anymore. Then I hustled around to the back door, which was left unlocked. This was not allowed at any time otherwise, as Mother was always afraid that someone would sneak in the back door.

I found a cardboard box that held a hot pan of chicken and noodles, some bread, and some jello in a small bowl. I carried it back to the temporary home where Dad and I enjoyed a good home-cooked hot meal. It was kind of exciting to be by ourselves in the beginning. I felt so big for an eight-year-old boy. Soon though, I missed the rest of the family, and the two week isolation period seemed to take a long time. Eventually the quarantine ended. About this time Betsey was taken to Iowa City for surgery. The last time I saw her was when I looked in through the front bedroom window to wave to her. She was in the hospital when the quarantine ended, and Dad and I could return home.

My First Brush With the Law

I was about five years old when we lived at 618 13th Street in Ames, Iowa. Our house was in the middle of the block on the south side of the street. We got city mail delivery, but the people across the street on the north side got theirs by RFD. Several older kids lived in this neighborhood, none of whom I remember today by name. I played quite a bit with two older boys and a girl. They were about seven or eight years old, but they put up with me if they had nothing else to do.

The main corner of activity in my small world was the filling station on the corner of 13th and Grand Avenue. It was a Skelly station. Grand Avenue carried a lot of traffic, as it was the main highway, U. S. 69. 13th Street was an important east-west street, even if it was a cinder road, as it marked the city limits. The speed limit increased at this corner as the cars went north out of town. I was warned that I should not play around the filling station; it was too dangerous with all of the cars and trucks coming in and leaving the station.

Just to the south of the station, along an alley, was a big vegetable garden. I always stayed out of it, because I knew that I would get "yelled at" if I stepped one foot inside. Also I was not allowed to cross any streets by myself. These were all instructions from my mother, who was in the house caring for my two younger sisters, Betsey, age 4, and Gloria, a newborn. Or rather, they were orders from my mother. She never gave instructions.

Life was really very pleasant for me as I wandered along the sidewalk pushing my hoop with a special stick. My dad had made me a cross-shaped device by nailing a short and a long stick together perpendicular to each other. He then found a metal hoop from an old nail keg, which he gave to me. He showed me how to start the hoop rolling. By steering it with the stick it would be kept rolling.

One late summer day two older boys and the girl came along. They looked me over and asked if they could play with my hoop. I let each have a turn to see who could go the furthest without having the hoop fall over. Eventually we grew tired of this. One of the older boys said, "Let's go over to the garden and throw tomatoes at the cars going by." This sounded like great fun. We invaded the garden. The older kids each selected a tomato and waited. I just stood there and watched, as I didn't know exactly what was going to happen.

At a command from the oldest boy the three launched their tomatoes. Some would actually hit a passing car. Then they all ran down the alley and disappeared. I watched from the edge of the garden as the cars screeched to a stop. The drivers got out and yelled at the kids, who were long gone by then. After a few choice words, they got back in their cars and drove on. A few minutes later, the three converged on the garden again to select another tomato and another target.

This looked like too much fun to miss. One time when they came back, I ventured into the garden and picked out a small tomato, that I thought I could handle. I then went to the curb so that I would be close to the cars, and I waited for a signal. The older kids all stood behind me in the garden. "Wait until I tell you to throw," I was instructed, so I waited. Several cars that looked good to me went by, but still no word. Then I noticed that the three older kids dropped their tomatoes and ran down the alley. I looked back to the street and saw a car driving up. Now that the other kids were gone, I decided to try it alone. I reared back and threw my tomato with all of my might. Thwack, it sounded, as it hit the side of the front door.

The car quickly came to a halt while I stood and watched the driver get out. Then I saw the uniform. I had hit a police car. I was too scared to run. The policeman came to the curb and took me by the upper arm and said, "Boy, what's your name?" "Edwin," I told him. Then he said, "Where do you live?" I pointed to my house; it was three houses up the alley. He, still holding my arm, walked up the alley, and I had no choice but to go along. I was really scared, as I didn't know what bad thing would happen to me next.

I knew what a policeman was, and I was fearful that he might put me in jail. In my fear, as I was half-dragged along the alley, something happened over which I had no control. As we stood at my back door waiting for my mother to answer his knock, he looked closely at me and sniffed the air with his nose.

When Mother came to the door the policeman asked, "Is this your boy?"

Mother replied, "Yes, what did he do now?"

"He was throwing tomatoes at the cars going by on Grand Avenue, and he hit my car."

She became very angry but, before she could start her discipline, however, the policeman said, "Lady, this kid must be very scared as he just messed his pants, and he needs some immediate attention. I'll be going now, but just tell him that I never want to catch him throwing things at cars again."

I never threw tomatoes at passing cars again.

Running Away From Home

I imagine that nearly every kid at some time in his life decides to run away from home. When I was 8 years old we were living on the north side of 13th Street in Ames. This street was a cinder street. At the time I had a sister, Betsey, who was 7, another sister, Gloria, who was 4, and my little brother, David, who was only 2. I felt that I was given too many jobs such as kindling, coal, cobs, and holding the rope for the goat while it grazed. The other kids had no jobs.

One day I decided that I did not want to live in that house any longer. I had seen comics where the character packed all of his belongings in a kerchief, put it on the end of a stick, and went off in search of adventure. I decided that I, too, had to pack some belongings to take with me. What to pack? I knew that I would need some food, something to keep me warm (even though it was summer), and something for me to do with my time.

I went to my corner of the room and searched through my belongings. My prized possessions were three Big Little Books, one featuring Clyde Beatty, tiger tamer. I put the books on my bed. When my mother was outside taking the laundry down from the clothesline, I went to the kitchen. I picked out a towel from the rack behind the cook stove. I selected an apple from the back porch and a slice of bread from the bread box to take care of my hunger. Next I went back to my corner of the bedroom and placed the towel on the bed, put my belongings in the center, and tied the two opposite corners in a knot. Then I tied the other two corners in a knot. This made a tight package that I could easily carry. I did not have a stick. I knew there was one in the woodshed where the kindling was kept, but I knew if I went out there, my mother would see me and figure out what I was up to.

I carried my precious bundle out the front door and down the lawn to the street. If I went west, I would get to Highway 69. This is where I had seen the gypsy wagons pass, and Mother warned me never to let them

"get a-hold" of me. I chose to head east. I walked along free as a bird. When I got to the Kellogg Street corner there was a slight jog in the street. When I went around that jog, Mother could not see me. I found that I could no longer see my house anymore either.

Here I decided to make my stand. I put my parcel down and leaned back on the lawn to rest. I looked at the sky and imagined all kinds of animals in the cloud formations. I had no care in the world. I could take care of myself. After a few minutes of this reflection I decided to open my parcel. I took out one of the books about Clyde Beatty. I read the book. The text was on the right hand page; a picture illustrating the text was on the left page. When that book was finished, I got out the second book, looked around my surroundings, and set to reading again.

After what seemed like an hour, I got up and stretched. Then I slowly walked out into the road so that I could look back to see my house. Nothing was amiss. No one was out searching for me. No one was calling my name. I picked out the apple and ate it while reading my third and last book.

Then I started figuring out what I would do when it got dark. I had a light jacket that I could use for a pillow, but I began to wonder about what kind of animals might live out here in the night. After my piece of bread was gone, I had nothing else to eat. And, I was getting thirsty. I had not thought of taking something to drink. I knew some houses on our block had cisterns. They had pumps and a tin cup so I could get something to drink, provided that the home owner did not get crabby at me and chase me away.

The more I thought about my future, the later it was getting. I looked back toward my house and there was no commotion there. After a few minutes more, I packed up my Big Little Books, picked up my jacket and headed for home.

When I walked in the front door my mother knew I was home by the slam of the screen door. She called to me to, "go get some more cobs for the stove right now; I'm fixing supper." She never even knew that I had run away from home. Betsey was always with mother so she never knew that I was gone either. David and Gloria were too little to care. I never ran away from home again, as I learned that there would be a problem with my meals if I really left for good.

Scooters

Two-wheeled scooters were abundant when I was a child. The fancy ones had rubber handle bar grips, two rubber tires, and even a brake. This brake was a lever mounted ahead of the rear wheel so that the rider could step on it. Pressure against the wheel would slow or stop the scooter. The rider would usually put his right foot on the scooter, steer with the handle bar, and provide the power by shoving back the left foot. Using a scooter was a lot faster than walking. I did not have a scooter, as my parents could not afford to buy me one.

One time, a neighbor gave me a pair of clamp-on roller skates. They could be adjusted by loosening a nut in the middle and moving the two parts back and forth. One day I decided that maybe I could make a scooter with one of the skates. I talked with Dad and explained my idea. We went to the barn behind our house on 13th Street. He took that skate apart completely. The toe clamps were removed from the front half. The heel plate was taken off the other end. Then Dad fastened the two parts of the skate on a 1" x 6" board which he had sawed about 18 inches long. On the front end of the board he secured another piece of board to serve as the steering wheel. Then he cut a piece off a broom handle and screwed it on top of this vertical board. He cut a triangular block to help hold the two boards together at a right angle.

Now I, too, had a scooter. I could put my foot on the board, grab the handle bar and scoot with my left leg. The only problem was that I could not steer, as my handlebar was fixed solid. Dad painted the whole scooter green. I was able to move along with it pretty well. The south side of 13th Street had a sidewalk. The north side did not. If I wanted to go somewhere, as to the filling station at 13th and Grand Avenue, I would carry my homemade scooter across the street. It was great fun. I was fearful that the other kids would make fun of me, but they asked if they could borrow my scooter. This contraption lasted until we moved from the neighborhood when I was in Third Grade.

Grocery Stores in Ames

When I was a young boy, there were many small neighborhood grocery stores scattered around town. Some that I recall visiting were on Lincoln Way. The one near the corner of Lincoln Way and So. Walnut was the closest to us when we lived in Charlie Anderson's house. Others were: the Ninth Street Grocery, the 13th Street Grocery at the corner of 13th Street and Duff Avenue, the Northwestern Grocery across the street from Roosevelt School, Beatty's Store on Knapp Street next to the Interurban railroad tracks, Leppo's Grocery on West Street next to the drug store, the West Street Grocery (which was across the street from our house on West Street after I was in third grade), and Community Grocery downtown on Duff Street. I know there were many others, but these I recall visiting at some time.

These little stores sold canned goods and all had a small meat counter with hamburger, hot dogs, some cuts of meat, and most of the time, chickens. Also, they usually had a penny candy counter. We bought our bread, milk, and some meats from these stores.

The major stores were located in downtown Ames along Main Street. I recall going into three different ones; the A & P, the IGA, and Rushings. These stores were visited only once a week, most of the time on Saturday nights. Dad would back the Model A Ford into a parking spot on Main Street and get out to talk with the other fathers. Mother would take all of the kids along as she shopped the other stores along Main. Finally, just before we had to go home for baths, my parents entered the grocery stores to buy our supplies for the week. The oatmeal boxes were high up on shelves, along with the other light items. These were lifted down by a long-handled pole with pinchers at the end.

Mother would walk up to the counter and engage a clerk. He got out a pad with white and yellow slips alternating in it. He put the cover under the yellow copy and got out a pencil and started taking her order. As she wanted an item, he would hurry through the store and pick it up and bring it back to the counter. After all of the items were piled on the counter, he took the book and wrote up the order, putting the price of each in the right-hand column. Sometimes a second set of pages was required. When he was finished, he added up the prices in the right-hand column by hand. Then he added it again, putting the subtotal at the top of the second and successive pages. Then he put the items into bags or boxes.

Many items were sold in bulk. Mother had a five-gallon can with a tight lid in which she stored flour. Her flour order came from a bulk can and was put into a clean paper bag. The top was folded over and tied with a string. Crackers were in a barrel on the floor, as were pickles. Fresh meat was stored in the meat case, which always had a meat scale on top. Mother would watch the butcher carefully as he weighed each parcel to make sure that he "did not have his thumb on the scale."

I loved hanging around the coffee machine. The coffee beans came packaged in one pound bags, which were folded on top and held in place with a wire that bent down to hold it closed. She selected the brand she wanted, opened the top of the bag, and poured the coffee beans into a machine that ground them. A dial selected the degree of fineness of the grounds. The smell, as the beans were being ground, was very pleasant for me. The brand that Mother frequently chose was the Eight O'Clock brand. The bag was red and had a picture of a black rooster crowing. The empty bag was placed under a spout before the grinder was turned on. When the grinder stopped, the bag was removed and resealed. There was no decaffeinated coffee in those days.

Eggs were displayed in wooden egg cases which sat on the floor. Each layer of eggs was separated from the others with a pressed cardboard. Flour was usually sold in cloth sacks. Gold Medal was the favorite of Mother, who, as I stated above, bought it in bulk. When we bought the flour in sacks, the sacks were saved, ripped open down one side, and made into dresses for Gloria and Betsey, my sisters.

If our bill was paid in full, we kids were given a stick of candy. If we still owed something from the past visit, the treat was not mentioned.

What a contrast to grocery stores today! The old store was labor intensive with the clerks doing the running for items. Today, the store is managed by a clerk at a checkout counter. The customers must run around the store for the items. Then the clerk scans for a bar code which prices the items, totals the bill, and usually does not grant credit, except by credit card.

The Community Grocery is lifted up by me for special mention because this is where we did most of our shopping after we moved to West Street. There were two reasons for this. One is because Ray Ihles, the store owner, gave Mother her groceries on credit. The other is because Mother could order by phone and her order was delivered the same day by someone operating a motorcycle with a sidecar. College students made the deliveries after school.

It was embarrassing to me to listen to Mother call Ray and place her order. I can imagine him standing at the phone with his pad, wishing she would hurry along and leave out the side comments. She would say, for example, "Ray, how is your cabbage today? Last week it looked pretty wilted. Make sure that I get a good solid head." Or she would say, "Ray, I want four pork chops, but last week you sent me some that were real fatty. Trim off that extra fat."

Later that day, the student would pull his motorcycle into the driveway between our house and the apartment house next door. We lived atop an embankment, so he lifted the sacks and boxes up on the "bank," as we called it, and then he usually hoisted himself up the retaining wall, where he picked the boxes up and carried them into the kitchen for Mother. I don't ever know that anybody got a tip, as we had very little money ourselves.

At the first of each month, after payday, Mother would board the bus and make the rounds to pay bills in cash. We kids had to tag along if there was no school. The first stop we always made was the Community Grocery. Mother was always one month behind, since we charged the groceries until payday, but she wanted to make sure that she started the month with a zero balance. I don't really know how she managed with the little money we had, but I never remember a time when we did not pay Ray first.

One last item that I recall from the Community Grocery involved the cone of string. Ray ran the meat market; his wife ran the grocery counter. Ray had a large cone of string on a dowel in the counter. The string then ran up to a hook-eye in the ceiling, then along the ceiling to the meat counter, and then through another hook-eye down to the counter level. When Ray wrapped meat in a package, he grabbed the end of the string and tied it around the meat parcel. Then, after the string was tied in a knot, he jerked it with two hands to break the string from the cone. He priced the meat with a black grease pencil. We took the parcel to the grocery counter to pay or charge. Today, the butcher scale has a label printed out with the weight, price per pound, and total cost along with a bar code and the name of the meat cut. What a contrast to the stores of my childhood!

Chapter Four

Moving to West Street

I Helped Us Move

We moved to the college from 13th Street when I was in the third grade. It is hard for me today to realize the problems that my parents had raising four children on a \$90 a month salary that my father earned as a janitor at Iowa State in the Mechanical Engineering building. The bus fare from 13th Street to the college was, in 1935 and 1936, the small amount of 5 cents. When the weather was warm enough, my dad walked from 13th Street to Brookside Park, crossed the suspension bridge over Squaw Creek, followed the cinder path which paralleled the Interurban tracks to the college heating plant. In the evening he returned by the same path. All of that walking to save 10 cents a day! We could not afford to run our 1929 Ford Sedan, and besides, Mom, Dad, and we four kids could not all fit inside. Dad decided to move closer to the campus so that the walk would not take so long.

This house was located at 2907 West Street. It stood on top of an embankment with concrete walls around all sides. Dad had persuaded a friend, Elmer, who had a Ford truck, to help us move. The small house looked much bigger when it was empty. Elmer parked in the driveway, and handed up each piece of furniture for Dad to carry into the house. I helped carry in the small items like footstools and cartons. When the truck had been emptied, Dad told me, then a nine-year-old boy, to stay with the furniture while they went back for another load.

"Okay, Dad," I replied with as brave a voice as I could muster. I tried to look like it would be an adventure for me. As they backed out of the driveway, I apprehensively looked around the house. The living and dining rooms were aligned on the west side of the house; the kitchen was located at the back. I noticed a bedroom just east off the living room. I hesitated to explore any more until Dad got back with the next load. I pulled mother's rocking chair to the front windows and positioned it so that I could see outside to watch for Dad to come back.

As I rocked slowly in the familiar rocking chair, I heard a creaking of the runners on the hardwood floor echo lightly throughout the empty house. I looked out of the pair of windows facing West Street. Across the street were two huge billboards on a vacant lot next to the West Street Grocery on the corner of Campus Avenue. The grocery store had two motorcycles with sidecars parked out in front of the billboards. Boys were loading the cars with sacks of groceries for the afternoon deliveries. Although it was a school day, this day in April, Dad had Mother send a note to excuse me to help with the move. Dad had taken a day off work. He hated to do this as it cost him a day's pay, but he figured it would save us money to do our own moving.

He searched for a long time before he finally found this little house located on a hill. The yard was cut away on all sides and replaced with concrete retaining walls that were about four feet high on the east and west sides and 3 feet high on the south. The house we rented for \$8.00 per month which is all that he thought he could afford. It was owned by Lester Armstrong, who lived in a neat white house a block west on West Street.

The house was dwarfed on the east by a three-story apartment building owned by Mr. Armstrong. The lot was filled at the rear with about 11 garages, two that connected to our store room, and nine that were located on the rear of the lot. The center three garages were actually in a barn, which had a second level that we used for storage. Our assigned garage was in the east portion of the barn. My mother called it the barn instead of the garage.

West Street was paved to where West Street and Woodland Avenue joined. Woodland veered off to the north; West Street veered to the south. Woodland was paved until it got to the Polhemus house; then it

turned to a cinder street. West Street was paved until it intersected with Wilmouth Avenue. There it extended only for two more houses before ending. Wilmouth was also a cinder street.

As I sat rocking in my rocker in front of the big windows, the world looked big and the people hurrying by seemed interesting to me. I had no idea who any of them were. I wondered if I would see them go by every day from now on. There appeared to be a complete lack of children. This worried me as my best friend, Paul Severson, was left behind when we moved. My mother told me that since we would be leaving for the college I would be making new friends. As I let her know that I was really going to be missing Paul, she promised me that I could take the bus to visit him sometimes. This made the move possible in my mind, though many years later I realized that I never even had time for one visit. I found that I soon did make many new friends.

After an impossibly long time, the truck growled into the driveway with another load. Dad was following the truck with our Model A car, filled with many items. I ran out the front door and to the concrete steps leading to the sidewalk. Dad yelled up to me, "You get along okay? You weren't scared, were you?"

I replied, "No, I'm all right. Can I help unload?" Things were not so worrisome now that Dad was back. Dad called back, "Why don't you pick the little things out of the Ford while I help Elmer unload the truck? I promised our new landlord that we would not be blocking the driveway very long. It's about time for the 'old maids' to be coming home."

I went to the car and opened the door to see it piled high with clothes, lamps, and toys. This 1928 Sedan was to me the very best car in the whole world. It hauled us to Grandpa's house in Huxley, to the Old Dutch Mill Root Beer stand at the corner of Lincoln Way and Grand Avenue. We hauled everything imaginable in this car.

Now, I took loads of clothes into the house and put them in the only bedroom in the house that had a closet. Dad called to me to be careful and not let any of the clothes drag on the ground. This was hard to do when the clothing was my mother's dresses. There were two bedrooms in this house. There were six of us. I wondered how we would all fit. I found out that my parents took the front bedroom; my two sisters got the middle room; and David and I would be put in the store-room addition off the dining room.

After Dad and Elmer finished with the truck I heard Dad say, "That should do it, Elmer." When he answered, "I will stay and help you with the Ford," Dad called back and said, "No, you go on home. Thanks for the use of your truck. I will help Buster finish unloading the Ford."

Dad and I finished taking everything out of the Ford and putting it inside the new house. Then he locked the front door using a skeleton key. Many times later I was amazed that we always locked the house with the skeleton key that anyone can purchase at the dime store. Not very secure, but we always locked the door. When we had moved into this house we locked the door and put the key under a brick on the porch. That is the first place a burglar would look if he wanted to get into our house.

We drove back to the old house the back way, which was through the college campus, up the hill past the college cemetery, and then continuing east to the Vet Quadrangle. There we turned north to pass under the Chicago & Northwestern Railroad tracks to 13th Street. This cinder road led to our house. We were met at the door by Mom and the other kids. They had packed the remaining household things in boxes. We all helped load the boxes into the car for the last trip. David and Gloria got up front with Mom, while Betsey and I climbed upon and between the boxes in the back. Dad had removed the back seat of the car and left it at the new house, so we had to sit anywhere we could fit in. I sat on a box next to a basket of food that was going to be our supper. I hoped that there would be a pie in there somewhere.

Mother and Dad had been to the house the night before to clean it up, but the other kids had not see it yet. I told Betsey about how big it was. She and Gloria were excited about the new house, but David was too small to really know what was happening. I was too tired to care as we bounced along 13th Street on our way. I looked out the side window and slumped against the jiggle box. I watched as we retraced our path along this new way. We went past the cemetery and back down the hill to intersect with Hyland Street.

Then we turned on West Street at Shipley's barber shop corner. When Dad was driving past the drug store and Leppo's Grocery, I spotted a corner of the house and yelled out, "There it is, a piece of it anyway. See!" The other kids said "yes" even though I felt that they would have said "yes" to a green barn.

As we pulled into the driveway I wondered if we could park here again, or would the old maids be bothered. Dad drove around to the back and parked beside the west garage. Dad unloaded the boxes, picked up one, and took Gloria's hand. Mother picked up the basket and picked up David. She told me to take Betsey by the hand as we all hurried up the hill to the front door. Gloria was so tiny that Dad called her his "Peanut." I like peanuts so the name sounded like a good one to me. I hurried along, dragging Betsey, as I wanted to be first to the front door.

The 2907 West Street House

This house had two bedrooms and a bath room on the east side. The west side was a living room, a dining room, and a kitchen. The living room had one part that had a lower ceiling. This house had been an early 4th Ward schoolhouse. That front part with the lower ceiling had been the cloak room. A lean-to had been added to the house on the west side, with a door leading to it from the dining room. This lean-to had a concrete floor and a drain in the northeast corner. This room we called our storeroom. It served, for much of the time we lived there, as a bedroom for me and David. Since the room was so cold in the winter, Dad finally bought an oil burning stove and placed it at the foot of my bed. This room also served as the wash room. The wringer washer and tubs were stored near the drain at the foot of David's bed. When we got our first electric stove, the kerosene stove was moved to the foot of my bed. This stove was used to heat the wash water and, in the late fall, to bake the lefsa. This is a Norwegian bread that is stored dry in large circular sheets. We all loved it.

In the beginning, Mom and Dad took the front bedroom for themselves; Gloria and Betsey took the next bedroom; and David and I were in the storeroom. Later, Mom and Dad switched to the storeroom. They bought a bunk-bed for the front room. David slept on the bottom until he was old enough to stay on top. Mother feared in the beginning that he would fall out if he was on top.

I can not really believe it now, but along about the 1940's my parents rented out the front room to two students. They felt that they needed the money. John Phyle and Ed Bock were the two boys. They slept in the bunk beds. Mom and Dad moved into the storeroom. David slept on a couch in the front room. I slept in the dining room on a "sanitary cot" which folded down in the daytime to take less room.

We were really crowded in this house. The students were given priority in the bathroom in the morning and before bedtime. Somehow we all got along. Mother rented the rooms for \$2.00 per week for each boy. This brought in \$16.00 per month. Our rent by then was about that. I recall sitting in the front room on a chair as the two boys listened to a Joe Louis fight where he knocked out Max Schmelling.

The next year, my parents rented out both bedrooms to students. Betsey had died by then. Gloria and David both slept on the studio couch in the living room. I continued to sleep on the sanitary cot in the dining room. When the year was up, my parents decided that arrangement should not continue, so Gloria was moved back into her bedroom. David and I took over the front room again.

Much later, my parents traded places with my brother and me again. Dave and I continued to use the storeroom as our room from then on.

The house was so cold in the winter. There was no insulation. The house was heated by a coal-fired furnace that took up most of what little basement we had. There was a dug-out basement under the rear four rooms. There was a walk-out basement door on the east leading to the driveway between our house and the apartment house next door. Coal was delivered to this door and dumped in the opening. It soon became my job to shovel the coal into the coal bin on the west side of the basement. Ugh! What an awful job!

In the coldest weather the door to the storeroom was left open. The room was unheated and not insulated so it was still necessary to cover up with many quilts. The regular sheets were much too cold to sleep in. Mother got some flannel sheet blankets which made the cold beds seem so much cozier. In the mornings we would both jump out of bed and hurry to stand over the register that was between the dining room and the living room. Our clothes had been piled up near there when we went to sleep. I used to straddle the register, but when hopping into my pants I frequently put a foot down on top of the hot register. I learned quickly to jump back off.

This house served our family for over 25 years. The rent gradually increased over the years, but it was still not an expensive house to rent. Dad kept the house in good repair. David and I volunteered one year, after we had left home, to paint the house. Mr. Armstrong bought the paint. Dave and I struggled to finish the job. The east side was the most difficult as our ladders had to be raised from the driveway, making that side a two-story climb.

The Barn

I lived most of my time in Ames at the West Street house, atop a hill surrounded by a concrete embankment that we all called "The Bank." West Street angled off to the left, curving around an apartment house. Woodland Avenue started at our corner and ran down the hill to the north for a block, and then turned west again. Our house, that we rented from Lester Armstrong, was dwarfed by a three-story apartment to the east. A driveway ran between the two houses. It led to a set of garages behind our house. These garages had been built on both sides of an old barn. The barn itself was divided up into three garages, with a set of steps leading to the second story between two of the garages.

The east garage in the barn portion was ours. It housed our old 1929 Model A Ford sedan. It caught fire many years before and had all of the wiring burned out. We could not afford to have it fixed, so Dad just pushed it into the garage and put it up on blocks to preserve the tires. He removed all of the spark plugs and filled the cylinders with oil to keep it from rusting. The car filled most of the garage, but we started putting items in the garage for storage. Gradually the garage filled. There was stuff stored in front of the car, inside the car, on both sides of the car, and behind the car. What was most often needed was stored just inside the garage door. The old barn held much of the overflow of our 25-year residence in the house.

I loved to play in the barn, even though I was not supposed to be there. I searched around, crawling over, under, and around the Ford. I found a small wooden sled that Grandpa Nass made for me when I was a baby. Dad had fastened a wooden box to the sled to hold each of us when we were babies.

I spotted the legs of the three-legged stools that went with the small drop leaf table that Grandpa had built for me and my sister, Betsey, when I was four years old. This table had a single metal pedestal in the center.

Our garden tools were all located just inside the door. We did not have room for a garden at our house there as we had at the 13th Street house. During the war, World War II, we used these tools on our victory garden on West Lincoln Way, just east of the Welch School football field. There were box after box of old pans, dishes, and kitchen utensils. Instead of throwing anything away, we just put it into boxes and put it in the barn as they were "...too good to throw away," according to my mother.

In front of the car could be seen part of a hobby-horse that Grandpa made for Betsey. Gloria and David had played with it some when they were little, but it took up too much room in the house. Baskets were hung from the rafters. Dad wired them up. Stuff was hanging from all of the walls, again fastened by nails. Boxes of old clothing were put into the car.

This garage served as the vault for our priceless treasures; it was locked with a padlock at all times. Woe be to any of us kids if we ever left the barn unlocked. This did cause a problem with the key. Dad started out with a padlock and two keys. He kept one himself. When we kids, usually me, lost the key, I got the other one from Dad. I was to return it to him as soon as I had opened the lock. Eventually, I managed to lose this key, too. Dad then had to cut the old padlock with a bolt-cutter and purchase a new lock. This

time he wired one key to a big block of wood. This key hung on a nail on the back porch, just outside the kitchen door.

When I wanted to be by myself I would sneak the key off the nail, hurry to the barn, and unlock the padlock. Then I would hurry inside, pulling the door shut behind me. From the house no one would notice that the garage was open. I had locked the padlock on the hasp so that no one could accidentally lock me inside.

Carefully I would climb over the broken chairs, parts of ladders, pots, pans, and tools until I could stand on the running board of the Ford. I opened the driver's side door and squeezed inside. The boxes inside were my imaginary passengers. I searched the cloth pocket in the side of the door and found the Iowa road map. I opened the map and folded it so that Ames was showing. I put this map on top of a box in the passenger seat beside me, pretending that Mother was holding it for me. I looked for a town near Ames that would be fun to visit. Aha, I found Eldora. That looked good. We had once been driven to Pine Lake by friends in a Whippet. That was the only time I ever rode in that kind of car. I continued my imaginary trip by pretending that the boxes in back were Dad, Gloria, and David.

I talked out loud to the family as I explained our trip. Then I told Gloria and David to shut up. I told Mom to hold the map tightly so that a gust of wind didn't blow it into my face while I was driving. (Dad had always given the same warnings when we were heading to Kanahwa.) Then I called out, "Watch out, I am going to start the car. David, you stand outside and be ready to close the barn doors when I back out."

I put the gear shift in neutral, turned an imaginary key in the ignition, and stepped down hard on the starter button on the floor. Many times in the past Dad had cranked the Model T, but this was dangerous. One time it had back-fired and he suffered a broken arm. This electric starter in the Model A was a real improvement. It could still be cranked by hand if needed. I did not want a broken arm, so I used the electric starter for my imaginary run. As the engine turned over slowly, I fiddled with the choke. It was wired with a ring on the end. When pulled, it "choked."

Soon my imaginary engine roared to life and I pressed the clutch, shifted to reverse, and slowly backed out of the garage with the necessary engine noises supplied by me. "Rhemmm, rhemmm," I grunted, with an occasional "Bang" for a back-fire. Then I pressed on the brake pedal after I figured that I was backed out far enough. I yelled to David, "Lock the door up tight and get in." I waited while he climbed in Mom's side of the car and away we went. I even folded the back of her seat down so that David could climb in.

I shifted gears, with appropriate engine noises, and we headed out the driveway between the apartment house and our house. When the imaginary traffic let up, I headed east on West Street past Peyton's West Street Grocery, continued past Leppo's store, Peterson Drugstore, past Red Shipley's barber shop, and at that corner I turned south on Hyland Avenue and continued to Lincoln Way. Here I waited for traffic on the Lincoln Highway. I turned the wheel to go east on the highway. We were on our way. I pushed the throttle, the clutch, and the brake for each stop, start and movement along a path I had chosen to get me out of town. I waved to Murphy, a friend, as I honked the horn, supplying the "Ooga, ooga" noise myself. I was now on the Lincoln Highway which ran from coast to coast. I could go anywhere from here.

The Fort Dodge, Des Moines, and Southern Railroad tracks crossed Lincoln Way near Lake LaVerne. I paused here while I looked to see if the train load of coal was coming to the heating plant. When I arrived downtown I slowed carefully as I drove past the Highway Commission building, then crossed the railroad tracks on the Chicago & Northwestern line from Des Moines. I stopped at the Duff Street intersection as that is where U. S. Highway 69 turned south. I continued on the Lincoln Highway to Nevada. I guessed the time it would take for me to drive there, looking out the window at the imaginary farms that I passed. I commented on the horses, cars, and machinery that we passed. I waved at onlookers that I encountered. Once in awhile I yelled at David and Gloria to shut up and sit still so that I would not be distracted and have an accident. (I regularly received such warnings when I was the passenger and Dad was driving.) We usually stopped at school yards for picnic lunches, so I checked the map for a likely spot.

This trip continued; I even took the wrong road once in awhile and turned around. Finally we arrived at the lake. Here we boated, fished, and had a good time playing in the water. I decided when it was time to head home, so we "could get home before dark," as Mother used to request on our real trips. The return trip to Ames was quicker, less eventful, but always safe. I pulled the Ford into the garage carefully missing all of the stored items, and fitting neatly into the space. The imaginary trip was ended. It was time for me to return to my family.

Then I squeezed myself out of the door of the car and closed it. Now I worked my way to the rear of the garage, again climbing over boxes. I pushed open the barn door and emerged into the bright sunlight. I unlocked the padlock and pushed the doors closed, put the padlock over the hasp, and closed it. I tugged on the padlock to make sure that it was locked.

I went back into the house and put the key back on the nail. Mom asked, "Where have you been? I looked all over for you and didn't see you."

"Oh, I was just messing around outside," I replied. She would never know that I had driven all the way to Pine Lake and back that afternoon.

The Standard Oil Filling Station

When we moved to West Street I recall only three filling stations in the Fourth Ward, all located along Lincoln Way. There was one across the street from the College Savings Bank, one at the corner of Hyland, and one at the corner of Franklin Avenue. The closest station to our home was the Hyland station. As I have related elsewhere, I went to the station on a regular interval to purchase a gallon of kerosene for 14 cents. This was used in our kitchen stove.

The station was in a very small building. Out front were two pumps with the Standard Oil crown on top. The gasoline was pumped into an upper glass cylinder by moving a long handle on the side back and forth. There were shield-shaped numbers inside indicating the number of gallons from 1 to 10. Ten gallons was a full tank. When the level of the gasoline was at the required number, the operator put the pump nozzle into the gas tank and pulled on a "trigger" device which released the gas. Gravity fed the fuel into the tank. In those days I don't ever recall anyone ordering more than 10 gallons, but I suppose that some trucks might have had tanks that large.

The gas tank was under the driver's seat on the Model T and on top of the motor hood on the Model A. The location for the tank on the Model A made it much easier for the driver as he did not need to get out of the car. Tires were checked, the windshield was washed, and the oil was checked for every car by the attendant. I watched the process with interest.

There was no garage attached to this station in the 1930's. On the west side of the station there was a grease pit which was about 2 1/2 feet wide, about 6 feet long, and about 4 feet deep. Steps led down to the bottom of the pit on the north side. When it was time to grease a car, an attendant would drive the car toward the pit. He then carried his grease gun and wrenches down the steps. After he laid these down, a helper drove the car, or most times just pushed it, over the pit. A block was put behind and in front of a wheel to hold the car in place. Then the attendant would remove the oil plug, drain the oil into a can into a funnel on top of a can, and proceed to grease the underside by pumping a handle at the side of the grease gun. After the oil had all dripped out of the engine, the plug was put back in place and the car was rolled back far enough for the attendant to climb up the steps.

Then the attendant put new oil into the car by filling a can from an upright oil drum. A plug had been removed from the drum and replaced with a pump. The pump had stops which could be pulled out for 1, 2, 3, or 4 quarts of oil. The attendant set the proper stop and turned the crank putting the oil into the can. Then he took that can to the car. A spout was attached to the bottom of the can, which was lowered into the fill hole in the engine. The attendant then released a lever which allowed gravity to drain the oil can.

Another Standard Oil filling station was located just east of the Lincoln Way bridge over Squaw Creek. It too had an outdoor grease pit. At a later time, at both Standard stations, a grease rack was installed outdoors which allowed the car to be hoisted up so the attendant could service the car by walking underneath it. Still later, the station added a garage with two doors on the east side of the station. This allowed the grease rack hoist to be moved inside. This is the way the grease jobs are still done in our gasoline stations.

The name "filling station" gave way to "gas" stations. Then that name was changed to "service" stations. Many of our service stations have now been replaced by convenience stores. At these the customer uses a self-service pump to fill the gas tank. The attendant can stay inside the store and handle the money or charges. Most stations today do not provide service which was so common in the days past.

How I Met Two Friends

My remembrances of Dorothy Marie Schanche and Pauline Gibbs are deeply imbedded in my mind. My mother was afraid that I would be lonely going to school the first day after our March moving day. She told me that she would accompany me and make sure that I got to the correct room on my first day. I rebelled at that idea. I could just see the batch of kids at my new school, Welch, laugh and taunt me. As a compromise she called around the neighborhood, spoke with Mrs. Peyton, the owner of the grocery across the street; she visited Miss Reba Carey, the second grade teacher at Welch, who lived in the apartment at the junction of West Street and Woodland Avenue, and several others. She found out that there were two girls in third grade who lived nearby. She spoke with Pauline's mother and asked if Pauline would pick me up on her way to school. Pauline, to this day, says she does not believe the next part, but it is absolutely true.

Pauline stopped at our house in the morning and told my mother that she was Pauline. She was wearing a coat, but it was opened in the front. Around her neck she wore a very small whisk broom on a string. I thought that was interesting. I never asked her why she had the broom and she never told me. She took the broom to school with her more than one time in third grade. Anyway, Dorothy Marie Schanche and Pauline Gibbs were my only friends in those first few days. Pauline was a demon on the playground as she could play softball much better than I. I was amazed one time as we played at noon on the lower playground to the south of the school. It was covered with sand burrs. I actually hit the ball and ran to first base. Pauline followed me to the plate and proceeded to wallop the ball far into the outfield. I figured that I was safe as I surely had time to run for home. Pauline passed me between second and third base and beat me home. The others playing insisted that I was out since I had been passed by her. So much for my softball ability.

Pauline, Dorothy Marie, and Dorothy Peterson, played work up many times when we played in the vacant lot south of Polhemus' house on Woodland and west of the Peterson house. We played croquet here, softball here, and even skated here once or twice in the winter after an icy spell. One time I was pitching and Pauline was hitting. She hit a foul ball into the weeds along the embankment to the south. I ran to find the ball, but I also discovered an old croquet ball lying there. I picked up the croquet ball and tucked it into my mitt to conceal it from the others. Returning to the mound, I delivered a perfect strike across the plate, and Pauline connected with a mighty whack that must have vibrated her hands on the bat.

I had a real crush on Dorothy Marie in those early grades. During recess I talked her into letting me "pump you" on the swings. She sat on the seat. I stood on the seat and pumped the swings after getting a boost to start us. There were three swings just east of Welch School, down a small slope. We continued to swing on the swings. One time I pumped myself as high as I could before Dorothy got out there. It was a foolish effort to impress her. I slipped off the seat and fell from the swing and landed on the slope behind me with my breath knocked out.

My main source of income in those days came from selling coat hangers to the cleaners in the building east of the drug store. My grandmother was a maid at Mary B. Welch Hall, and she let me come over at the end of each quarter to pick up coat hangers left behind by the dorm girls. I bundled them into groups of 50 coat

hangers, and the cleaners would give me 25 cents for each bundle. I probably sold about a dollar's worth of coat hangers a year. That might explain why I was not such a "big spender." I did buy some candy at Countryman's store north of the school.

Many times we played work-up softball as a recess class activity. This was the only time I recall playing on the north end of the playground - beyond the tennis courts. I was playing catcher; Gerald Murphy was at bat. Dorothy was in the outfield. I was losing the ball all of the time, partly because I was afraid the ball would hit me, and it would hurt. I was a real wimp in those days. Everyone laughed at me and called me "butterfingers." I was determined to catch the next ball the pitcher threw, so I moved forward to meet the ball just as Gerald decided to take a hefty cut at the ball. The next thing I recall was lying stretched out over the plate. Someone ran to get the teacher. That ended the game for the day, as I had a lump on the back of my head.

I recall standing on the sidewalk with my classmates during an eclipse of the sun. We stood on the east side of the school looking at the sun. We had each been instructed to bring several negatives to put together in a sandwich affair to block the sun's rays. This would be a no-no today, but our teacher had all of us looking at the sun through these negatives.

I also recall bringing my lunch to school when the weather was bad. We all ate together in the basement of the school, which was not completely excavated. It was dark down there as there were only two bare bulbs burning in the ceiling of the hall. My favorite lunch was peanut butter and banana sandwiches. Usually I had a cookie, too. My friends were jealous of me when I suffered an extended bout of colitis. Dr. Armstrong (who lived on Woodland about three blocks west of our house) recommended that my mother feed me often with small amounts of food. During the day I was to eat crackers and drink cream. While the rest of the students were working on their papers, I was granted time to eat a few Ritz crackers and have a small bottle of cream. I don't recall how we kept the cream cool, but I had it about three times a day for at least a year.

Welch School Teachers

Jay Busby was the football coach, and shop teacher, and also taught a class in civics. Although I was a lousy athlete, Jay took a special interest in me. He helped me overcome my shyness and insecurity, for which I am still grateful today.

Another favorite teacher of mine was Ruth Miller. She taught Algebra which opened up a new world for me. Math was about the only subject that I really liked. It seemed so logical and so easy for me. I worked very hard to beat out Gerald Murphy, but I was seldom successful. Most of the time I did come in second, though. Ruth followed us to the high school, and I had her again in both the 11th and 12th grades. Much of my interest in mathematics, which I taught for 37 years, came from her.

Ada Versteeg was my English teacher. She enlisted in the WAAC's, which was later renamed WAC's. The whole class wrote to her one time using the V-Mail system where the letters were filmed and reduced in size for easy mailing. John Morgan enlisted in the Marines after we were in 9th grade. He was older than we were even though he was in 9th grade, but I never figured out how he got in without lying about his age. I never heard from him again after I sent him one V-Mail letter.

John Harlan had a butch haircut and was the feared principal of Welch. We had a box social one time, and Bob Perry and I went together to buy the box that Rosalie Robinson and Dorothy Peterson brought. (I really liked Dorothy because I delivered papers to her house at the corner of Hillcrest and Woodland Streets, just north of Ellis Street.) The event was held in the gym, and afterwards the couples were wandering off to the movies. Bob and I asked Rosalie and Dorothy to go to the movies with us. To my amazement they accepted. I knew that I could not go without permission from my mother, so I went to the principal's office and borrowed the phone to call 2091W. Mom gave me permission; then Bob called his mom. Bob lived at the ISC Poultry Farm. We went to the movie which was about pirates. Afterwards Bob turned south at the College Savings Bank corner and headed home. I walked home with the two girls.

Dancing the Hornpipe

A big feature of the junior high days was the H. M. S. Pinafore. Bob Loomis, Murphy, and I danced the Hornpipe Dance. I was wearing boots which made me very clumsy, but it was fun to be a part of something.

Refugees from Germany

After the outbreak of World War II, our school received two German students. The boy was Helmut and his younger sister was Elizabeth. They were our age or older, but, since they could not speak English, they were both placed in a lower grade. It amazed me to see them progress so quickly. Helmut passed us by soon. They were refugees from Hitler's Germany. As I recall, we thought them odd, but we did not make fun of them. My mother explained to me what they had been through.

Summer Playground

During the summer months the school operated a playground program at Welch which I really enjoyed. A major activity for me was playing box hockey using bent pipes and a golf ball. We battled the ball through holes at each end. Many years later I developed a summer program for Atlantic, Iowa, and my first construction was several box hockey frames. Gerald Murphy was the best at our school; no matter how hard I tried I could never beat him.

Locked In Under the Bleachers

One time several of us were playing in the gym at Welch, and we entered the space beneath the west bleachers to put the balls away. The PE teacher had left the area, and someone put a piece of wood between the doors to both bleachers. Since these doors opened out, we were stuck under the bleachers. We yelled our heads off but no one heard us. Finally, we settled back, as we knew that some teacher would miss us. We managed to get the grill off the hole in the west bleacher but could not remove the grill on the outside. We imagined that we might all stay here until we died. Finally, it was suggested that we leave a note between the two grills telling who we were and what we might have become if we had not perished. What imaginations! Someone said that he might have been president; others came up with other ideas. Many times over the years I thought it might be fun to return to the scene, remove the grill, and take out the paper. I was saddened years later to learn from my brother, David, that the school had been torn down.

Other Activities at Welch School

Early in third grade we used to play with huge, interlocking blocks that we used to create a store, a post office, and other constructions. Dorothy Peterson was the Postmaster as we learned to write and mail letters to the other class members.

Art was another activity that I enjoyed. We had huge jars of library paste that we applied with wooden paddles similar to tongue depressors. I learned that the peppermint smell of the paste was too enticing. Many paddles of paste ended up in my mouth. The taste was great. I can't imagine what the insides of my stomach looked like at times.

When we tried to produce the Nosey News, our eighth grade newspaper, we first tried to use real type. Gerald Murphy lived in a house that was not yet completed. His father became seriously ill, and the family lived in the house with sheets or blankets hung between the upstairs rooms. The walls had been framed and had slats on them preparatory to being plastered. Somehow, Murphy had an old press and a lot of type in boxes in one of the rooms. We worked for days hunting through the type, which we had to read reversed. I

don't recall ever finishing a paper by that process. We finally gave up on the lead type and switched to the ditto equipment which I described elsewhere.

School Snacks

When I was in the fifth grade at Welch School I got many stomach aches in the evenings. I thought that I was just hungry. I lay on the couch in the living room as my mother cooked supper. Sometimes I would double over and lay in the fetal position. Most of the rest of the time I felt fine.

Mother took me downtown to see Dr. Armstrong. We went to his office over the stationery store and waited in chairs. When I got inside, he examined me by thumping on his hand as he moved it about my stomach. He asked me a lot of questions about when it hurt, where it hurt, and how long it hurt. Then he diagnosed me as having colitis.

He gave me some pink liquid to drink once a day. He also told Mother to give me snacks in the middle of the morning and in the middle of the afternoon. The snack was to be crackers and cream. When it was a weekend, no problem. Since I was in school the other five days, she decided to do something. She came to see the teacher, Miss West, after school. She had me in tow. As I sat there, they discussed what could be done. They agreed that Mother would send cream in a fruit jar and crackers in a little box. I would give them to Miss West as soon as I arrived. I don't know where she put them, but I do know that at some time in the morning, she told me to go get my crackers and cream. I drank half of the cream and ate half of the crackers in the back of the room. In the middle of the afternoon the procedure was repeated.

The other kids in the class got jealous as I got a treat twice a day. Actually, the crackers and cream tasted pretty good. Each evening, I would carry the sack back home and bring it back refilled the next morning. I do not recall how long I did this, but it was for at least a half of the fifth grade year. I went back to Dr. Armstrong one more time. He checked me again and asked some more questions. My problem subsided by the time the year ended.

My friend, Dorothy Schanche, recalled my crackers and cream as we were planning for our 50th class reunion. It must have made an impression on her at the time. Today I have no evidence of a colitis problem.

Washday

Washday for our family was a once a week activity. Monday was always washday. When I was small I just observed things from afar. When I got older I, was pulled in to do my assigned jobs. The laundry area was in the storeroom of our house on West Street. This also served as the bedroom for me and my brother, David. This room had a concrete floor with a drain in the northwest corner of the room. The wringer washing machine was kept in this corner, along with the tub stand and two washtubs.

On washday Dad moved the machine out into the room. He removed the wooden cover from the drain, a cover that he made to keep the machine from falling into the drain when it was stored. On the south wall, at the foot of my bed, stood the old kerosene stove. The copper boiler was always stored on top of this stove ready for the washday summons. If we were out of school, it was my job to fill the boiler using a long handled pan. I held the pan under the faucet which was fastened to the wall over the drain. Then I dumped the pan into the boiler across the room. This continued until the water came up to a level that time had marked on the inside of the boiler.

Mother took over now and lighted the two burners under the boiler. While the water was heating, she helped me set up the tub stand in position next to the washing machine. We put the two tubs on the stand. The two tubs were filled with cold water, again moved via my long handled pan. When I got older, my mother let me rig up a piece of hose. She did not like it because water leaked on the wall behind the faucet, but I rigged up a piece of wood to wedge there to direct the leakage into the drain.

When the tubs were full, I then got the clothes basket in place. It was situated beside the washer and next to the final rinse tub. Dad had rigged up a smaller stand to hold it up to the wringer level. Later, they had metal legs that clamped onto the basket. When everything was filled but the tub, I was given a bar of Fels Naptha soap and a very dull paring knife. I then cut slivers of soap from the bar directly into the dry washing machine. When the water in the boiler was finally hot, Mother ladled it into the washer. I held the long stick (about the size of a broom handle) and stirred the water to dissolve the soap. Mother did not want me to handle the hot water when I was small. When I got much bigger, I filled the tub with the hot water, too.

Then Mother took over and sorted the clothes into piles on the floor. We kids all had to scurry about and bring in all of our dirty clothes. If the weather was warm and we were on summer vacation from school, she would sometimes ask David and me to take off the underwear that we were wearing. She would wash that, too. David and I would wear only our outer pants until the clothes had dried.

Mother would hand me a rag that she swished about in the washing machine. I was to use this to wash off the clotheslines. They would be soiled by the dirt and bird-poop between washdays. Then I would finally try to disappear for the rest of the time. Mother washed a load, then put it through the wringer into the first rinse tub. She would push the clothes into the washer by hand. Dad had made a special stick for her to use, but she usually just pushed the hot clothing into the wringer. Then she added a bit more hot water from the boiler and put in the second load. She turned her attention to the rinse tub, which she stirred with the stick. The head of the wringer was rotated so that it was positioned between the two tubs. Then she pushed the clothes from the first rinse tub into the final rinse tub. To this tub either she or I had added some of "Mrs. Stewart's Bluing" liquid. I thought that it would turn my underwear blue but actually it helped to keep them white.

From the final rinse tub, Mother would again position the wringer another 90 degrees so that the head was between the last rinse tub and the basket. Again the clothes were stirred and then pushed through the wringer. As I got older, I was drafted to run the clothes through the wringer after Mother had put them into the first rinse. She did not want me to handle the hot clothes directly from the washer. That was fine with me. Mother would take the basket out to hang the clothes on the line while I ran the others around the two rinses and into a second basket. This speeded up her operation, and I actually did not mind doing it.

After the clothes were all on the line, I was then drafted to empty the washtubs into the drain. First, I was told to use the pan, which took up much time. Then, after I invented siphoning, as related in another story, I would siphon the water into the drain. The washtubs were set aside, and I rotated the washer until the drain hose was positioned over the drain. Then I opened the faucet-thing and let gravity remove the soapy water. Each tub and the washer all had to be rinsed with my long-handled pan. If we were in school, which was most of the year, the washer and washtubs were left for me to do when I got home.

Mother watched her wash on the line to make sure that something was not blown off onto the ground and to keep any birds shooed away from the clothes. It was fun for me to watch the pants and dresses flap in the wind. It made the clothes seem like they were dancing. When the clothes were dry, Mother would gather them in the baskets and bring them inside to fold. The folding was done in our living room, as our basement was not suitable for much of anything. Gloria, David, and I were all drafted to help put away the things that did not need ironing.

In the winter, we had special problems. Mother always hung the clothes outside, but they would freeze on the lines. In the evening, after school, I would be told to help bring in the clothes. They were frozen stiff. Mother warned me not to bend the frozen cloth where they had hung over the lines as the cloth would be weakened. Instead we carried the stiff clothes into our living room and piled them on the chairs and couches. Mother had two sets of wooden clothes racks which were unfolded and placed on the floor. One rack stood in the living room, another in the dining room. Then we arranged the frozen clothes on the racks. They stood like cardboard cutouts. I enjoyed sitting on the couch and watching the stiff clothes sag as they thawed out. When they had thawed enough, they were arranged on the rods.

As so many wet clothes were drying in the house, the air smelled damp and fresh. Nothing smells so good as wind-dried clothes. The bedsheets carry that fresh smell until they have been used for the one night.

One note of special recall for me was the time my mother got just a bit too close to the wringer. When the wringer was stored between washings, the safety latch was opened so the wringers could completely dry out. As we prepared for washing, Dad always fastened the wringer latch and tightened the tension between the wringers. This was done by turning a handle atop the wringer head. In case the wringer jammed, a bar on each side of the wringer could be hit and the assembly would open up. On this particular day, Mother got her hand too close to the wringer. Her fingers were pulled between the wringers. She hit the safety bar with her left hand, but the assembly did not open. Her hand was pulled completely into the wringers as she kept hitting the bar. Finally, her arm was into the wringer past her elbow. She could not reach the cord to the motor, the safety bar would not release the wringers, and her arm was severely hurt. With her left hand she reached up to the direction control and reversed it. Her hand slowly came out between the wringers.

Her arm was severely bruised. It began to swell by the time Dad got home for the supper which she cooked using only her left arm. Today one would rush to the emergency room for treatment, but during those Depression years they did nothing. Mother's arm continued to hurt for several days before the swelling began to subside. This accident made all of us more careful around the wringer. Dad took the whole assembly apart to see what could have jammed the release, but he concluded that her arm was so far into the wringers before she hit the release that the tension would not allow it to work. I watched her do the laundry several times after that, and she used the stick to push the clothes in. It was not too much later, though, before I saw her using her hands again.

Telephones in My Homes

During much of my early life in Ames we had no telephone. Those were the Depression years, and money was very scarce. For emergencies my mother would go to the neighbors for help. When we lived on South Walnut Avenue, Mother borrowed the phone on occasion from Charlie Anderson. He lived in the back of his house and rented the front rooms to my family. Later we moved to 13th Street, first on the south side and then on the north side; again we had no phone. We borrowed service on occasion from our neighbor, Mrs. Scott.

In 1937 we moved to West Street in Campustown. Here we got our first telephone. It was a black box made of Bakelite. It hung on the dining room wall. The shape was square with the mouthpiece in the center. This mouthpiece could be pivoted up or down to suit the height of the caller. The receiver was a black cone shaped piece connected to the box with a cord. The receiver was hung on a set of hooks at the left side of the phone when it was not in use. This phone caused me some problems; when my parents were gone, or my mother was ill, I had to answer the phone when it rang. I had to run to the living room and pick up a footstool. This I placed beneath the phone. Then I jumped atop the stool and stood on tiptoes to be able to talk into the mouthpiece. Obviously, the phone was hung in position for adults, not kids.

We had a two-party line, which meant that we could not call out or receive a call if the other party was using the phone. Farm families sometimes had four or more people on their party line. They each had numbers like 42F12, which meant call number 42 and then ring one long and two short. Anyone on the line could, and sometimes did "rubberneck," which meant that they listened in. If too many people were on line, the signal got so weak that the receiving party could barely hear.

For us, we had different suffixes on our number. Our number was 2091W and the other party on our line had the number 2091J. When our number was first assigned, it was 2091LW, or 2091LJ, which meant that the number was a new listing. Then when a caller asked for a number with an "L" in it, the operator knew to consult the new list. When a revised list was prepared, our number reverted to 2091W.

I don't know who was assigned to our party line at 2091J, but I felt sorry for them. They must have become disgusted, as my mother tied up the phone much of the time. She called everyone she knew at least once a day. Since the other party could not use the phone if it was in use, they had to pick up the receiver

and listen. If my mother was talking, they had to hang up and wait. We could hear a click whenever they hung up their receiver.

After three years or so, the phone company came and removed the wall phone. They replaced it with a desk model which was later called the Candlestick phone. It was again made of black Bakelite. The mouthpiece was atop a black cylinder. The receiver hung on a holder on the left side of the cylinder. The cylinder was attached to a heavy black base. In the center of the base was a circular disk which held the phone number. I thought it was very odd that the number was put on our phone when all of us in our house knew our number. Most people were right handed, so the phone was picked up with the right hand. The receiver was held up to the left ear.

All calls were placed through an operator. When the receiver was picked up and the line was free, we heard a voice say, "Operator." This meant we were to give her the number we wanted to call. As I grew older I began to play with the phone. In an attempt to be funny I would call a grocery store and ask, "Do you have Prince Albert in a can?" If the store employee would answer "Yes," thinking that I was referring to the Prince Albert tobacco, I would yell back, "Well, let him out." I imagine that thousands of other ornery boys pulled the same stunt.

Another call that I placed was at night when my parents were gone. Dad worked nights so he was usually gone. Mother sometimes ran over to the neighbors, and I went to the phone. I would call at random, and when I got someone to answer, I would announce that I was from the Electric Department. I asked them, "Is the street light at the corner burning?" Sometimes they would say "Just a minute. I will go outside and look." If they came back with a "Yes, it is on," I would stupidly say, "Well, go blow it out."

One day after making several calls to stores in Ames, my mother got a call from the operator. Mother was told that "Edwin has been making silly calls to stores and homes again." Then I caught it. That put a damper on my calls for a time.

Much later we got a desk model phone. It was smaller and had the receiver and speaker in the same handset. It rested on a cradle atop the phone. Again, it was basic black Bakelite. A round area on the base again held our phone number. We still had to make our calls through the operator.

Finally we got a dial phone. It looked just like the desk model but now had a dial where the phone number was recorded. By now, we had a private line. I imagine that the lady at 2091J was very happy to be separated from the Nasses. This number was CE24389, where the Cedar stood for the first two numbers in our city system. "C" stood for 2, "E" stood for 3 so Cedar 2 meant 232 which was the town prefix. This made a change from using an operator to automation, except when we had to make a long distance call. For this we dialed O for Operator, and she had to place the call for us.

Eventually the phones got smaller. The Princess style phone came out with the receiver, speaker and the dial on the handset. It rested in a cradle with a button that was depressed by the phone to shut it off. Some Princess phones had a lighted dial for convenience in the night. We had a lighted dial in our kitchen in the house on Boone Street in Webster City.

Next I bought a phone, when the Bell system was broken up, that had a base and a portable handset. This allowed one to carry the phone to other parts of the house. Sometimes, people using the phone put it down when they finished the conversation and then could not remember where they had placed it.

Now we have cell phones which allow greater mobility. Our children gave us a cellular phone one year so we could carry it in our car to use in emergencies. Now I see people driving and talking on the cell phones, walking down the street engrossed in conversations, and they even carry their cell phones into theaters, concerts, and, yes, even to the Methodist Church Annual Conferences. Here, the bishop had to request several times that the delegates shut off their cell phones when we had services.

Someday we may actually have wristwatch telephones like I used to read about in the Dick Tracy comics.

The Icebox Incident

Our house at 2907 West Street brought different chores for me to do than the 13th Street house required. We now had a coal furnace so I had no more cobs to carry. My folks bought an old ice box which stood about 4 feet high, 3 feet wide, and about 18 inches deep. This they put on our glassed-in back porch directly in front of a stack of three trunks that held our off-season clothing. We used this unheated back porch as a room and kept the back door locked always. The icebox held 100 pounds of ice at a time which melted into a shallow rectangular pan that sat on the floor under the icebox. It was accessible through a wide opening at the base that was covered by a narrow door.

Mother told me to empty this pan at least once a day and to check it every morning and afternoon "...without fail." When the pan got about half full I slid it out from under the icebox and carried it carefully out the back door and down two steps, where I dumped it into the driveway in the back of the house.

One day my life was so exciting and busy for me that I completely forgot to check it at all. Mother roused me from a deep sleep saying, "You forgot to empty the icebox pan, and it's running all over the floor."

"I'll get it in the morning," I sleepily replied as I turned over again.

She jerked the covers off the bed with the proclamation, "You'll do it right now!"

Sleepily I went to the back porch, unhooked the back door, and propped it open. Then I got down on my knees in front of the icebox and slowly slid the pan out from below. The water spilled no matter how carefully I worked, as it was overflowing. My knees got soaked. I picked up the tray and slowly advanced toward the open door. Mother called, "Hurry, now, before you let all of the bugs inside."

As I took a step with my right foot, the water sloshed out of the left side of the pan. Then when I stepped to the left, the water sloshed out of the right side. No matter how slowly I moved, I still lost a lot of water. My eyes were fixed on the water level as I tried my best to keep from spilling. About halfway to the door my left arm bumped into the stack of trunks, and I dropped the tray, pulling it toward me as it fell. I gasped a very deep breath as the ice water ran down the front of me, soaking my pajamas.

I stood, shaking with a chill, as the tray hit the floor with a clang. Mother stuck her head out the door and said, "Boy, you sure made a mess of that. Get busy and clean it up and get back to bed."

I went to the basement and got some old rags and a bucket. Then I crawled around the back porch on my hands and knees. I soaked up the spilled water, after shutting the door to stop the inflow of bugs. Dad came out and helped me move the icebox and the trunks so I could dry under them. Finally I got the back porch floor clean, put the rags on the line to dry, and put the bucket back in the basement. Then I dressed in dry pajamas and went back to bed. As I curled up in a ball to get warmed up, my mother stopped in the doorway and said, "...and next time remember to empty the icebox before it gets so full."

I would like to say that I followed her advice, but I forgot many times and she continued to get after me. I was always more careful when emptying it though. I thought the easiest solution to the whole problem would be to drill a large hole in the floor and let the icebox just drip through the hole, but Dad vetoed that idea.

The Penny Candy Counter

As Dorothy, Pauline, and others in the neighborhood walked to and from school, I passed the drug store on West Street about a block from my house. In the store was a large oak display case with glass top, front, and sides that let us each see the stock of penny candy. One could buy two jawbreakers for a penny. They

came in two colors, red and black. I liked the black ones best. As I sucked on a jawbreaker, I would stop and take it out of my mouth to observe the change in colors. As they grew smaller, the rich black or red color faded into a gray.

There were also small packages of candy cigarettes with names similar to the popular brands of cigarettes. One that I recall was Chesterfeld and was made to look like Chesterfield cigarettes. They were white sticks of candy with a red tip. I sat outside and put one in my mouth as I pretended to smoke. Another favorite was a whip of licorice. Again, these came in black or red. They were spiraled ropes of licorice. I did not much care for those awful black licorice cigars. These were shaped like a small cigar, with a flat spot on one end. They tasted like bitter tar, and the only good thing about eating them was to work up some saliva and spit as though we were chewing tobacco. The spit was dark black, which I thought was a sign of maturity.

Another popular candy was the paraffin candy with the liquid centers. After I bit into them and sucked out the liquid, the paraffin was chewed like gum. They were okay but they were never my first choice. The small boxes of Boston Beans were good. So were the Snirkles (they were brown and white candy rolled up like a cinnamon roll and sliced and wrapped in paper). The All Day Suckers were a disappointment as they never lasted all day.

The Bit-O-Honey bars were available for a nickel. They were good, but one cost as much as ten jawbreakers. The candy bar that was special was the Gold Brick. It was chocolate-covered, very small in size, and sold for ten cents. Naturally, I did not buy any of these because they cost too much. My mother was especially fond of them, however. After I was old enough to carry the Ames Daily Tribune, I would go out on Friday night to do my collecting. My mother always helped me figure out my money and how I would pay my paper bill. Some weeks I did not collect enough to pay the bill because some people were not at home. Mother always loaned me enough to pay my bill and have enough for my "bond." That was a small amount that the newspaper collected from each boy and saved until we quit. We were paid a small rate of interest; I think it was only one percent. To reward my mother, I got in the habit of stopping in the Peterson Drug store to buy her a Gold Brick.

Another cheaper candy that I especially liked were the boxes of Red Hots. These were cinnamon-flavored and were very small. When I finished eating these my hands were colored red. These small boxes cost five cents. Big round gumballs were another choice, but I did not really care for them much. Sometimes the gumballs were available in penny candy machines.

Mars candy bars were a treat I seldom could afford. They reminded me, though, of a radio show that I listened to regularly named Dr. I. Q. A man with a microphone traveled through the audience and asked questions of Dr. I. Q. If the question could not be answered, the person was given a box of Mars bars. I still recall hearing the announcer call out, "I have a lady in the balcony, Doctor." When she failed to answer the question that she asked, such as "... what was the capital of Outer Mongolia?" he would call back, "Give the lady a box of Mars bars."

It usually took us a long time standing in front of the counter as we balanced our desire for candy with our supply of money.

Here is a story that I wrote in the 1940's for our eighth grade newspaper, Nosey News.

CANDY DATE

by Edwin Nass

OH HENRY, have you heard that the THREE MUSKETEERS took BABE RUTH, Miss CLARK, and Miss MARS to the dining hall beside the POWERHOUSE on FIFTH AVENUE, TUESDAE afternoon? JOLLY JACK played music and they danced the TANGO. OLD NICK treated them to a DENVER SANDWICH and TOFFEE. They had a SUNDAE after they had been to see MAN 'O WAR run a race on the MILKY WAY. He fell and took a DIP in a BIT OF HONEY that was on the PLANK on the side of the

track. When they got him up he was not hurt, but still they put him in a BOXCAR on MOUNDS of blankets. Miss MARS gave a SNICKER and said, "BUY JIMINEY, this is the best time I've ever had."

There was a KRACKLE of lips and when the THREE MUSKETEERS departed, BABE RUTH, Miss CLARK, and Miss MARS said, "We're FOREVER YOURS!"

School Supplies

Before school started each fall, my mother would take me, my brother, and my sister to the Student Supply Store on Lincoln Way. In the center of the store, was a large table loaded down with school supplies. The store had several lists, one for each class, that told the minimum supplies that we were all supposed to have with us on the first day of school.

Typical items were two #2 pencils, an eraser, a Big Chief tablet, three or four notebooks, and, depending on the age of the children, packages of Crayolas. The paper used in the tablet was off-white, lined, and very coarse paper. The notebooks were pages of paper sewn into a brownish-yellow cover of some slick material. I was most intrigued by the back cover of these notebooks. They contained the addition and multiplication tables. They were 12 X 12 matrices, showing us the sum of 11 and 12, and the product of 11 X 12. I liked looking at the patterns the numbers made in each table. I imagine that the orderly arrangement of numbers helped to develop my interest in mathematics.

Of course, the store had also arranged many other items that were not required, but which appealed to the children. Pencil boxes, pencil sharpeners, wooden rulers, triangles, and, of course, the most interesting instrument, the compass. With one of those I could sit in class and draw patterns if the teacher's discussion was boring. Money was in short supply, so my mother usually allowed us only the things on the required lists. The minimum requirement for Crayolas was a box of eight crayons. Many of the kids were able to afford the boxes of sixteen crayons, and I was jealous of them. For instance, when I was in the lower grades, I could not color a face except with brown and orange. Those with sixteen crayons had a flesh color.

I always liked school. My favorite time was the first day of each new year. We would gather in the new room at Welch School and get an assigned seat. Then the teacher would pass out the textbooks. We would look them over and search for any tears, ink stains, and torn pages. Finally we were asked to fill out the form stamped in the front of the book with our name, the date, and our grade. If there was anything wrong with the book, the teacher made a note on that form. That way, at the end of the year, we were responsible for any damage to the books.

Now with my supplies in my desk, and my books all checked out, I was ready for the year. I must admit that much of the time I did manage to just get by. I did like arithmetic, but I hated the diagramming required for English, was bored with the science books, and gagged on the history. I did like to read, an activity that has continued to bring me joy.

Shooting Marbles

Each spring brings with it warmer days and warm memories of shooting marbles. It seems that each boy had a bag of marbles which he carried with him everywhere. We took them to school and played marbles at recess time. Inevitably someone would spill his marbles in the classroom. This always caused the students to laugh, as several boys scrambled to help pick them up. The teacher would usually confiscate the marbles until after class.

There were three versions of the marbles game that I played with the other kids. One was called "lagging." A line would be drawn in the dirt (mud) with the heel of a shoe. Then another parallel line was drawn, behind which the competitors stood when playing. The object of the game was for each player to toss one marble to the first line. The one whose marble was the closest to the line without going over was declared the winner. He got to keep the other player's marbles, if we were playing "keeps." My parents never

allowed me to play "keeps" because they felt that it was like gambling. Also, they warned that they would not buy me another bag of marbles if I lost mine.

The second game was called "pots." Someone would strike the soft ground with his heel until there was a hole. This we usually played in the grass, as the ground was softer there than on the playground. Another line was scratched out behind which we all stood. We each put a marble in the "pot." Standing behind the line, we tossed our marble to the pot, one at a time. Whenever a player managed to get his marble into the pot, he collected all of the marbles in the pot. When this happened, we each had to "divey up," which meant that we each had to put another marble into the pot for the next round.

The third game of marbles that we played was "shooter." Here we played on the hard gravel playground or on bare dirt. A circle was drawn, again with the heel of a shoe, which was only about a foot in diameter. Then an outer circle, about three feet in diameter, was drawn. We each placed a marble inside the inner circle and then arranged ourselves around the outer circle to play. One at a time, we shot a marble with our thumb and forefinger to try to hit one of the marbles in the center circle. If we hit a marble, we were able to claim it and shoot again. If we missed, on the next play we had to shoot from where our marble had stopped. For this shot, we were allowed to put one forefinger on the spot and then shoot with the other hand that was touching the first hand.

Nearly every boy had a special "shooter" marble that he prized. Often, if he lost it in a game, he got angry with the winner. This sometimes caused fights, which was another reason that my parents did not want me to play "keepers."

The Marshmallow Roast

As I drove home from a recent 50th reunion meeting in Ames, I reflected over the past from the time I was a third grader at Welch School.

I had a friend, Dorothy Schanche, whom I "pumped" in a swing on the school grounds. I was standing and straddling her legs as she remained seated on the board seat.

She was special to me, so I saved my money and bought Campfire Marshmallows, six to a package, for a nickel. I took some wooden matches from the match holder we had in our kitchen next to the kerosene stove. During recess, Dorothy and I went into the bushes at the northeast corner of the school. I collected some sticks which I piled together. Then I toasted the marshmallows over the small fire. Soon, the teacher came hurrying to the bushes and peered in. She told Dorothy and me to come out, and we did. I figured that I was in trouble. Some fellow student, probably jealous, reported to the teacher that Dorothy and Edwin were setting a fire under the bushes.

I doubt that Dorothy was scolded much. I was sent to the principal's office. Mr. Harlan asked me what in the world I thought I was doing. I told him that I had saved my money to buy a package of marshmallows and wanted to toast them with Dorothy during recess. He told me that I must never carry matches to school and must never start fires at school again. He called my mother and told her what had happened. Then he told me to go to class. That was the end of it. Usually when I got in trouble at school, I was sure "to get it" when I came home. Mother just told me not to carry matches and start fires again. No scolding.

Long Division and Playing Hooky

I hated learning long division at Welch School when I was in the fifth grade. Prior to that time, I felt pretty comfortable with arithmetic. It seemed to come to me naturally. Something happened to change that. It was the time we were given instructions on how to divide a number like 27 into another number like 3145.

The teacher passed out some manilla paper for us to use. Manilla paper that we had in those days was a very coarse paper, yellow-brown in color, and a bit thicker than the regular tablet paper. We were instructed to write, in number 2 pencil, the divisor 27. Then we were to draw a vertical line from the

bottom of the 7 to the top and then continue drawing to the right. Under this line we were to write in the number 3145. Then we were asked to guess how many times 27 would go into 3. Of course, that was foolish as it would not go in at all. So we were to ask another question: how many times does 27 go into 31. Now we had something. It went 1 time with a bit left over.

It went well enough if I found that my guess was not too large. But if the number I wrote below was too small I had another problem. In each case, if my guess was wrong, I had to erase my answer, the quotient, and try another. Sometimes, my second guess was not correct either. Then I had to erase the quotient again. Now you must remember that the manilla paper was very coarse. The erasers were those that had pink and gray halves. The pink side was for pencil, the gray for ink. When one had to erase a couple of times, a hole developed in the paper. Sometimes, when the combination of numbers was bad to guess, I would have two or three erasures and, almost always, a large hole in the paper. When the hole developed, I had to write my next guess above the hole.

This was not fun at all. One day, the teacher announced that "tomorrow we will be doing long division." "Ugh," I thought. I went home that night determined not to go to school the next day. I wondered how I could get out of it. Then before I went to bed, I told my mother that my head hurt. She checked my temperature by putting her lips to my forehead. She announced, "You don't have a temperature. Go to bed and maybe you will feel better in the morning."

The next morning, I moaned and groaned as I tried to get dressed. Mother then decided that maybe something might be wrong and told me that I could stay home from school. I gave a silent "Hurrah!!" as I climbed back in bed. After Gloria and David went off to school, Mother came into my room with a thermometer, some gauze, and a glass of water. She took my temperature and announced that I had no fever. I decided that I wanted to get up and play after about an hour lying in bed with nothing to do. Mother told me that I could not get up. "If you are sick, you stay in bed," she announced.

I did persuade her to let me put the radio on a chair next to my bed. She told me that I could listen to the radio as long as it was not too loud. After I had tuned the radio, Mother brought me a glass of grape juice and put it on the chair. "Can I have a straw?" I asked in a very weak voice to match my supposed illness. "I will get you some," she replied. She brought in a package of straws. I took one out of the box and put it in the glass of juice. I took a sip. Then I lay back down. Mother announced that I was to drink three glasses of juice that day. I sat up, took a sip, and lay back down. The effort of getting up and down caused me to come up with a great idea.

I took several straws and put one inside the other until I had a straw long enough to go from my bed to the glass, which I put on top of the radio. Now I would have the life of leisure. Whenever I wanted some juice I would just suck on the straw and fill my mouth as I lay with my head on the pillow. What a great invention!

After I had the straws in place, I leaned back on the pillow and commenced to suck on the straw. Sure enough, the chain of straws filled with juice. My mouth felt the flow as I continued to suck. When I finally had enough, I quit sucking and took the straw out of my mouth. To my surprise, the grape juice kept flowing. It ran on my face, down my neck and onto the pillow and sheets. What a mess! I sat up quickly and pulled the line of straws from the glass. "What had gone wrong?" I wondered. I quickly pulled the straws apart and threw them into the waste basket. Gotta' destroy the evidence.

Then I called for Mother. She came in and surveyed the mess. "What on earth did you do?" she yelled. "I don't know. I must have spilled the glass," I replied in meek wonder. That was the end of the experiment. I got better by noon and asked if I could go back to school. Mother said, "Okay, but if you feel sick again, come right home."

I pondered the situation to try to figure out how the grape juice kept flowing after I quit sucking on the straw. When Mother was working one Saturday morning, I decided to experiment some more. I got out a glass and the box of straws. I put four of the straws together. Then I filled the glass with water. I sucked on the one end and pulled the straw from my mouth. Nothing happened. The water quit flowing. I

considered that there might be something special about grape juice, but then thought it impossible for it to flow only with that juice. Next I put the glass on a canister on the counter. I sat at a chair beside the counter and sucked again. This time the water kept running.

"Aha," I thought. When the glass was above my head, the water flowed. When it was even with my head, it quit flowing. Then I got out a second glass which I placed beside the first one. When I got the water flowing again, I put the second glass under the straw and watched the water flow into it. When the water was nearly all out of the first glass, I raised the second glass higher, and the water continued to flow but back into the first glass. I played with my discovery several times to make sure that it worked. Then I showed my discovery to David and Gloria. They both looked at each other and thought, "This guy is really getting odd."

This new-found knowledge was soon put to work to my advantage. One of my jobs was to empty the water out of the washtubs and the wringer washer. This involved three things to be emptied. The first rinse tub was rather soapy; the second rinse tub was the one with the bluing in it; and, of course, the washing machine water was very soapy. Mother told me to take a pan with a long handle and dip the water from the tubs and washer into a drain in the floor of the storeroom. This took me a long time each Monday night after school. When the next Monday came, I went to the basement and found a piece of rubber hose. It was about 8 feet long. I took it to the storeroom and put one end in the cleanest rinse tub. I bent over until my mouth was below the level of the tub and sucked real hard. I took the hose from my mouth but nothing came out right away, so I put it back into my mouth and sucked again. This time my mouth filled with the rinse water. I put the end of the hose into the drain and sat and watched the water flow from the rinse tub.

Just before one tub was empty, I put my thumb into the end of the hose in the tub, and quickly pulled it out and popped it into the next tub. Water continued to flow when I removed my thumb. Finally, I transferred the hose to the washing machine. While I was waiting for the water to flow from the machine, I poured out the remaining bit of water from each of the tubs and inverted them on the wash benches to dry. I had to dry out the washing machine with rags after the water had been removed. Then I put the hose back.

Mother never knew what I had invented until one day when she spotted me in the alley behind the house tossing a ball on the garages. She yelled at me from the back door to get busy with my job. I ran around the house and found that one tub had emptied. The vacuum was lost because I was not there to do my job. I put one hose end into the other rinse tub and put my mouth to the other end to suck, but I got a bitter taste of soapy water. Then I came up with a great idea. I coiled the hose into a roll about a foot in diameter and put the whole thing into the tub. Then I put my thumb over one end of the hose to plug it. When I pulled that end out of the tub and removed my thumb, I found that the water flowed again. Never again would I have to suck on a soapy hose.

I had discovered **siphoning**.

Lester Armstrong

Lester Armstrong was our landlord. He lived a block west along West Street in a very nice house across a creek. He built a white frame bridge from the street to his house. The bridge had a fancy light mounted on a pole beside the west railing. I used to walk across it to pay the rent, which my mother never quite trusted me to carry without losing it. She always carefully tied the \$8.00, much of it in coins, in the corner of one of Dad's handkerchiefs. Then she would instruct me to "take this to Lester Armstrong's house and don't lose it. Get a receipt."

Mr. Armstrong would untie it on his desk in his office between the house and the garage. Then he wrote me a receipt and carefully tied it back up in the handkerchief.

I was saddened to learn recently that the house was razed to make way for three ugly apartment houses. The creek has disappeared as it was probably tiled out. Phyllis Burroughs' father purchased the house, and, after the death of her mother and father, Phyllis (now Heffron) and her brother sold the property. It was

just too valuable to continue as a one-family property. A number of apartment houses have been built there.

Armistice Day Blizzard

Many old-timers have recollections of the big Armistice Day Blizzard. I, too, have a recollection. It was Sunday, November 11th, 1940. The day was sunny and warm. In the early afternoon I persuaded Mother to let me take my brother, David, who was 5 years old, and my sister, Gloria, who was 7, to the movies in Campustown. When she agreed, she warned me not to stay more than the one showing. In those days the movies were shown continuously. When it ended, it was started up again after the previews of coming attractions. I had always had a problem in wanting to stay past where we came in and watch for the next "good part."

We each got our dimes, put on our coats, and I herded them to the New Ames Theater on Lincoln Way. Since the day was warm, we didn't even wear our overshoes. It was always a quicker trip going to the movies than returning back home. We bought our tickets at the outside ticket window and entered the darkened theater. After standing at the back until our eyes adjusted, we worked our way down near the front. The kids liked to sit where there would not be big people in front of them blocking their view. We watched the movie. I think it was "The Philadelphia Story," but it hardly seems appropriate for kids that young. Generally, we watched anything in those days of censorship in films.

When the movie ended, we watched the cartoon, then the previews, and then settled back to watch until we got to the part where we came in. When we got there, we decided to watch just a little bit more - then just a little more. Soon I was aware of Dad standing next to me in the front of the theater. "What's wrong," I asked, as I could not imagine his coming down after us. I checked the time, and we were not really too late. He told me, "The weather is very bad. Come on now."

We put on our coats and mittens and followed him to the lobby. As I looked out the windows in the door, I saw snow piled up everywhere. The wind howled and the snow swirled around the entrance to the theater. Dad hurried us outside. He was wearing his four-buckle overshoes. "Didn't you kids wear any overshoes?" he asked. The answer was obvious to him as he looked at each of us. We started walking west on the sidewalk, which had been scooped from the front of the theater. When we got to the corner of Welch Avenue, it was hard to see across the street. Dad helped Gloria and told me to take David's hand.

By the time we made our way to the bank corner, it was obvious that we were not getting along very well. The snow was so deep that David and Gloria could not take steps anymore. Dad then got Gloria behind him, David next in line, and he told me to bring up the rear. "Don't lose sight of David," he called to me. Off we went like three ducks behind the big duck. Dad would take a step, then another real close. Gloria would step in the hole in the snow made by his overshoe. By taking little steps, he cleared a path for Gloria and David to be able to walk. I had no trouble because I could take bigger steps. Soon our feet were getting cold in all of that snow. Dad told us to keep moving. If we stopped, our feet might freeze.

Slowly, we made our way to Sheldon Avenue. The Lincoln Apartment building was situated at that corner. The building had three different doors leading to a small landing for stairs to the upper floors and the basement. Dad decided that we were just too cold to go on, so he helped us up the steps and into the first door. Inside, we stomped our feet to shake off the snow. Then we sat on the steps to rest. Walking, one step after another, in the deep snow was very tiring. We took off our mittens and blew on our hands to warm them up. Dad helped David and Gloria get the snow off their shoes so their feet could warm up.

Outside the blizzard howled. We saw no one outside at all. No traffic came by. It seemed to us that we were the only people around. After about 10 minutes or so, Dad helped the little kids with their mittens, tugged their caps down on their heads, and told us that we had to move on. We went out the back door to save a little distance in the cold. The wind drove the door back as we struggled to get out. Then we began the long trek north, Dad breaking the path, Gloria following, then David behind her, and me in the rear. Dad checked back on us regularly. He continued to urge us forward. We made it to West Street and turned

west. Only two more blocks to home. There was no more stopping anywhere to warm up now. Gloria and David both complained that they were cold. Dad kept walking.

Finally we got to our house. The snow was so deep that we couldn't even see where the steps were. Dad stomped around on each of the steps to let us get a toe-hold. Up we went, one step at a time, again in Dad's footsteps. Mother was waiting by the door. She had been "worried sick." She grabbed David and helped him off with his coat, cap, and mittens. She told him to stand over the heat register, which we all called just the "register." Dad helped Gloria. Both Mom and Dad were worried about frozen feet so Mother got the dishpan and put some warm water in it along with a lot of cold water from the tap. Gloria and David sat on footstools and put their feet in the water. I was old enough to take care of myself, but Mother had me take off my socks to check my feet, too.

Later, we learned from the radio that many people had perished that day. Many were hunters who were enticed to go hunting on a nice warm November day. The blizzard blew in with great force and trapped them. Today, so many people probably would not get caught out in such a storm. Television, radio, and the phones alert people to the possibility of severe storms far in advance. People can still get caught, though, as we feel that we are in nice warm cars and will be okay. Mara and her friends got caught on I-35 coming back from a concert in Ames and had to spend the night out. Even to this day, she is very reluctant to repeat getting caught again.

Confirmation Class

As I looked at my confirmation class picture while I was attending our 40th class reunion, I sat and wondered about each of the class members. My family attended Bethesda Lutheran Church at the corner of 7th and Kellogg in Ames. We each attended confirmation classes every Saturday morning, meeting in a classroom just south of the kitchen in the basement of the church. It seemed to me, as I now think of confirmation in our church today, that we went to confirmation class forever. After talking about it to my good friend, Richard Berhow, he told me that we did go "forever," a period of two years.

For recess, in good weather, we played in the bushes outside the church. In bad weather, we played in the front hall of the basement. There were two girls who were incorrectly identified by the photographer who took the picture of our class. One was Margie Webber and the other, Barbara Weber. The photographer printed the last names of both as Webber. Margie Webber still lives in Ames on Donald Street in her parent's home. Barbara Weber lives in Branson, Missouri. Barbara was involved in putting together our 50th class reunion, and I had a wonderful opportunity to visit with her and correspond with her again.

I wonder what happened to all of the others in the photo. I understand that the two Erickson boys are no longer living. Harold was killed in the Korean War. Berhow is a retired industrial arts teacher and lives in Washington. I met Alita Wonderlee briefly at the 40th reunion. Paul Sjurson is a financial consultant in Fort Dodge. Dorothy Marie Schanche now lives in Des Moines. She is now called Marie Hart. "Skank," as she has been called by her friends, is the one person that has kept the class members in touch and worked hardest to put on the 50th class reunion. I saw Rev. Rogness many years ago being wheeled into Mary Greeley Hospital in Ames. He died shortly after that.

I recall the Penny-a-Meal Bibles that were given to us for confirmation. We each wrote an essay on the Penny-a-Meal plan for providing mission funds. My essay was pasted inside the front cover of my Bible. I assume that each essay was saved in a similar fashion.

I also recall that we would have to sit in the front pews and take notes during the sermon. It must have been a shattering experience for Rev. Rogness to read what I had written about his sermons, the contents of which generally went right over my head. I made sure that any humorous stores were quoted, but much of the rest of the message was lost to me.

Richard Hegland was in our confirmation class. I recall that his mother was killed on a curve on Highway 69 north of Story City. At the time, it was the most hazardous curve in Iowa. An insurance company

posted signs with an X on them at dangerous intersections where deaths occurred. One of the X's was for Richard's mother. He was not in our graduating class, so I assume that he moved away before then. He became a barber and had died before the time of our 50th reunion.

One person that I must recall from my confirmation class days was my favorite Sunday School teacher. Her name was Carrie Skrovig. She was a spinster lady who lived on Campus Avenue, about a half-block from my house. She frequently came to our house to visit with my mother. She used to grab me and "rough-house" me and my brother and sister. She did not teach us the Saturday catechism, but she did teach the Sunday School class we were in. As a part of the class, she was determined that we learn by heart the old Lutheran hymns such as "Onward Christian Soldiers," and "Holy, Holy, Holy." I was impressed as she presented a line of verse to us, had us sing the one line, told us the story about that one line, and then had us sing it again. After we had mastered the first verse, she had us sing it together. Then she went on to the next verse. Maybe, on a given day, we would get only one or two verses learned, but we knew them very well. Gradually she took us through about a half-dozen hymns.

Going to the Movies

When my family lived on West Street, on some Saturday afternoons we would all go to the movies in Campustown. The two theaters were the Varsity and the New Ames. The New Ames had a tall neon sign on it that just said Ames, but to recognize some remodeling, Joe Gerbrach named it the New Ames. It usually showed the first-run movies. It had a balcony with restrooms located over the lobby. Many nights a rope across the stairs to the balcony told us that the balcony was not going to be used during that showing. The Varsity was a newer theater, all on one floor. It had less seating. This theater usually showed B grade movies - usually a western and a gangster picture. I favored the Varsity. My parents did not care for those types of movies, so they usually went to the New Ames. I recall that the cost for the movie was 10 cents for each kid and 25 cents for my parents. That was a real treat for our family as we generally did not want to waste the little money we had.

Mother and Dad bundled up if it was a winter day. Dad wore a heavy woolen coat, usually over a sweater, to keep warm. Mother had a couple of sweaters and a cloth coat. She always wore a head scarf, which she tied tightly under her chin. Gloria and David bundled up with galoshes, mittens, and woolen caps. Gloria, at some early day, wore a hand muff. It was a tube of woolen cloth which hung from her neck on a string. She put one of her hands in each side of the muff. Sometimes this was used instead of mittens.

Off we went. One movie that I recall going to with the whole family was "The Five Little Peppers And How They Grew." Another was "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm." I felt that these movies were little kids' movies, but I went along anyway. The Andy Hardy series was more my style. Sometimes, when I had a dime to spare, I went alone on a Saturday afternoon. My parents did not believe that it was proper to go to the movies on Sundays.

Usually I would run ahead of the other four. I was embarrassed to be seen with them. The clothing they wore was "old looking." Dad wore what I much later called a "robber hat." It was the cloth cap that we saw in the gangster movies of the 1930's. I figured that if I kept ahead of them no one would notice that I belonged to them. When I got to the theater, I would wait for them to catch up. Once we got inside I always tried to go clear up front to avoid sitting with them. David would sometimes come up front with me, but Gloria usually had to stay with our parents.

Sometimes we would pack a small sack of candies. Mother thought that the refreshments sold in the theater cost too much money. If we had some hard candy at home, she would wrap it up in a handkerchief and stick it in her pocket to dole out to us.

The shows in those days ran continuously. When one showing ended, the next started over in a minute or two. When the show ended, I would want to stay longer and watch the beginning again. Many times I would protest that we should stay just to the next "good part." Dad would usually come down and take my arm to pull me outside. Once outside, I would hurry ahead, again, so that people would not think that I belonged to this family.

Many years later, I went back to visit with "Red, the Barber." He operated a shop a block east of our house. He told me that when the people in the shop saw me scoot along, they knew that the rest of my family would be along shortly. So much for my desire to be incognito on those trips to the movies.

Before we moved to Campustown, the main theater in my life was the Capitol Theater on Main Street. It was located near the east end on the north side of the street. It was the oldest theater in Ames and was generally open only on weekends. Here I saw the best western and adventure films on Saturday for a dime. The cowboy movies were fun, but the guns never seemed to run out of bullets. The guys in the white hats usually won. Fist fights that went on and on made up most of the fighting. The kissing at the end of the movie made many of the boys my age hide their eyes and groan. The "Sons of The Pioneers" was a singing group that showed up in many of those movies. The second feature was an adventure movie. I recall one about a lumber camp starring Andy Devine. If the feature was a cops and robbers show it might have Chester Morris in it.

Easter Egg Hunt

As I drove through Stanhope last night, I saw a man putting up a sign announcing an Easter Egg Hunt. That brought back memories of my Easter Egg Hunt experiences in Ames. There was a vacant field just north of the girls' dormitories at Iowa State College. This was the scene of most of the hunts that I took part in.

Parents brought their kids to the field and lined them up behind a rope. College students had colored and hidden many eggs on the field. Now, of course, there were a lot of eggs, so the hiding places were all filled up. We could easily see the many eggs in plain sight. At a signal, the rope was dropped and we kids ran forward to pick up eggs. Of course, there were no plastic eggs like there are today. These were all real eggs that had been dyed. Some of the eggs had numbers on them, colored by the dye. These were the prized eggs as they could be redeemed for prizes from the merchants in Dog Town. This was the name we all gave for the business district along Lincoln Way and Welch Avenue.

Betsey and I would collect all the eggs that we could see. She put her eggs in a bag; I just stuffed them into my pockets. Since there was fierce competition, the eggs were quickly gone. Betsey and I would then check the eggs for special marks. I recall only one time having a prize egg. Mother took us to a store to check the list that all of the stores posted in their windows. The prize egg earned a candy bar.

Later, I saw another side of the egg hunts. Mother asked me to take my sister, Gloria, and my brother, David, to the egg hunt one year. I walked with them to the east side of the campus and waited with them behind the rope. The hunt was limited to all children below a certain age, but I felt that some of them were older than the limit. I told Gloria and David to run as fast as they could for the far side of the lot. Most kids stopped as soon as they found an egg and the horde ran past them for the rest. This way I felt they could get to the largest number of eggs.

It didn't work out that way. On the command, "Go," the rope was dropped and Gloria and David raced for the first eggs they spotted. By the time they got there, faster kids swooped down and picked them up. Then they ran for others with the same effect. They always got there just a little bit too late. I noticed that many of the kids would check out an egg, and, if it was not a winner, they would just smash it on the ground. Some even stepped on them and squashed them. Before the time was over, several of the younger kids were in tears. I recall trying to help Gloria and David find one intact egg each. They got no winners the only time that I took them. At least they did not cry. They did manage to pick up some unmangled eggs and seemed to be happy with the results.

For me, the whole experience was not a good one. I hoped yesterday, as I drove out of Stanhope, that the hunt would be carefully monitored by age group, so that even the smallest kid could experience the joy of finding an egg.

Red, The Barber

Red Shipley had a small neighborhood barber shop at the corner of Hyland and West Street. It was a good location because of all the college students who lived in the area. I walked by the shop every day as I went to school. Red was frequently standing at his window and would wave to me as I walked by.

I got haircuts infrequently. When I began to get too shaggy looking, Mother would give me a quarter and send me to see Red. Red would put a padded board across the arms of the chair and help me climb up to sit on it. He talked with me as he put the cloth about my neck. I knew from past experience that if I sat very still and held my head as he told me, he would give me a nickel when I left. The first time he gave me a nickel I took it home to Mom. She told me that since he gave it to me as a reward, I could spend it at the drug store on candy if I wanted. Most times I would spend only a penny at a time to make the nickel last longer.

Sharing Brotherly

I like pumpkin pie. To this day pumpkin pie is my most favorite pie. A rich creamy filling atop a thin flaky crust and smothered with thick whipped cream makes my taste buds work overtime just thinking about it.

Today's weak chemical imitation canned whipped cream, that looks fine as it is squirted out of the can but settles in a disgusting plop after only a few minutes, doesn't count in my book. Cool Whip in a plastic tub maybe looks a bit better on the pie, but it still does not match the real thing. To make real whipped cream in my childhood days you poured off the top part of a bottle of whole milk. You beat it with a hand beater until it began getting stiff, you added sugar and a dab of vanilla, and then you beat it until your wrists ached. Then, and only then, you had whipped cream that deserved to be served on that delicious pumpkin pie.

My family loved pumpkin pie as much as I did when I was a child. Mom was an excellent cook and baked great pies. We had farm friends who brought us whole milk in a Karo syrup pail on occasion, so we had plenty of the ingredients for that famous pumpkin pie. There were five people in my family to eat pie one night, and everyone knows how hard it is to cut a pie into five equal pieces. Mom cut her pie into six equal pieces, served five of them and passed the bowl of whipped cream around the table. A cautionary glance from Mom warned me not to make a pig of myself with the whipped cream. What was left would be saved in the icebox for later.

Now you realize, if your arithmetic is correct, that five from six equals one. One piece of pie was left over and it was placed into the icebox. I watched Mom first put in the bowl of left-over whipped cream and then place a plate with the extra piece of pie atop the bowl. Yes, I mean ice box, the kind that would hold up to 50 pounds of ice which we got every two or three days, depending on the season.

Throughout the next day, while at school, I thought at random intervals about that piece of pie and how good it would taste. I knew that we kids would probably get it. When school let out, I took off on a run for home so that I might beat out all contenders for the prize piece of pie.

"Can I have that last piece of pie?" I called out to Mom before I checked to see where she was in the house. From our storeroom, which served for many years as our washroom, came the muffled reply, "Yes, but I want you to share it brotherly with Betsey." This disappointed me for a moment as half of the pie was lost now, but Betsey was younger than me and not yet home, so I had time to think.

I took the pie and the bowl of whipped cream from the ice box and put them on the kitchen table. The pie did not look quite as good as it had the night before. The top of the pie was hardened and shiny. A few cracks had developed on the surface, but it would still taste good. Inside the bowl, the cream had congealed slightly around the sides of the bowl. A few quick flicks with a fork took care of that. I put the pie on a small plate. Then I scraped out all of the left over whipped cream and put it on top of the pie. The

tablespoon was then used to distribute the cream evenly over the top of the pie. It was a work of art. I licked the spoon clean. Then I got out two forks, and placed them beside the plate. I sat down and waited for Betsey to get home.

As she came in the house a few minutes later, I called to her, "Mom said that I was to share this pie with you brotherly. I've got it all ready, so hurry up." She came into the kitchen quickly after she dropped her coat and papers on a chair in the dining room. I explained carefully, "No sense in dirtying dishes when we don't have to, so let's both eat off the same plate." Sensing her reluctance, but not because of sanitary reasons, I quickly added, "Now I know that I'm bigger than you and I can eat faster, so to make up for it, I'm going to give you the big end and I will start on the small end." Before she had time to react, I handed her a clean fork, pushed the plate into position between us and said, "Get ready, set, GO!"

While she plodded through the thick end of the crust, I must in all honesty admit today that I stripped out most of the filling and whipped cream. I even left the crust under my part of the pie. Tears rolled down her cheeks as she accused me of tricking her, and she ran off for the storeroom to tell Mom.

As I took the last abandoned piece of crust off the plate and put the plate, bowl, and two forks in the sink, I heard Mom coming around the corner. Betsey hurried behind Mom to see me "get my lumps" and listen with relish as I was scolded. I won't go into the scolding, as it was unpleasant. But at the conclusion my mother wisely said, "After this, when there is only one piece of something and I ask you to share it brotherly, I want you to do the cutting and then let Betsey get first choice. Do you understand me?"

Kite Flying

An early passion of mine was kite flying. Each spring I would get together string, an old kite, and some rags for a tail, and off I would go for a day of flying. The end of West Street was a good close place. It ended just past Wilmouth Avenue in a pasture. If there was no cow there, I could fly my kite without interruption. If there was a cow there, I checked to make sure it was not a bull. The main thing was that there were no trees. I fastened my kite with a string harness so that the string could be attached near the top or near the middle, depending upon the strength of the wind. Then I tied many strips of rags together in knots to make a long tail. I found out over the years that it was easier to control a kite with a long tail.

I went to the upwind side of the field and worked my kite into the air. It was great fun to run the string out and play with the kite. I started out with my string wound around a stick. I could hold onto both ends of the stick and the wind caused the string to "pay out." Winding it back up at the end was really hard to do. It tended to bunch up too much at one end. Some kids had a wooden contraption that had a box shape with two handles, one at the top on one side and the bottom on the other. I tried to hammer together one for me, but it fell apart soon. I guess that my nails were not long enough.

Another good place to fly the kites was in the field north of the tennis courts on the Iowa State College campus. There were no buildings or wires to worry about. Later, it became a challenge to fly the kite with a lot of obstacles. One day, in a very good wind, I flew my kite out of the driveway between my house and the three-story apartment house next door. I managed to get the kite up in the air and ran all of my string out. It flew very well. I imagined that it was flying over Oakland Avenue. It did not take much effort that day to fly, so when Mother called me for lunch, I tied the string to our house and went inside. When I finished my quick lunch, I raced out back and found the kite still up there.

I would guess that the kite flew for about four hours. As the wind died down, I found that the kite started to sink below the roof of the garages. Finally, the line went slack. I started following the string north to see where it ended. As I ran along picking up string, I hoped to find the kite at the end. Instead, the string ran across Campus Avenue and soon I came to an end. It was obvious that a car or something had hit the string and had broken it. I wandered about the back yards for two blocks but never found the kite.

The most exciting kite flying occurred one day when I decided to try to take some aerial pictures. I got my little 828 camera and wired it to the front of the kite, after setting the film so that "1" showed in the red circle on the back. I fastened two strings to the kite. One was to hold the kite; the other I fastened to the

shutter. I got my brother, David, to help me. He was reluctant, but when I threatened to hit him if he didn't, he decided to do it.

He was to hold the line to the shutter and be certain that there was always slack in the line. I handled the string on the kite. We were in our front yard, and I had to fly the kite over the street and miss the telephone and power lines. Carefully I managed to get the kite up in the strong north wind. When I got it high enough, I worked my way over to David and switched lines with him. I instructed him to hold tightly to the kite string. I then backed up with the shutter line and jerked really hard on it. The kite swirled around a bit. Then I switched lines with David again. Yelling at him if he fell behind, we both rolled up our lines.

When I got the kite back on the ground, I removed the wire around the camera. I turned the knob until the "2" showed up on the back, and then rewired the camera to the kite. After some coaxing, David and I got the kite back up for a second shot. This continued until I had about six air shots. The final two shots on the roll were taken, one of David, and one of me.

I sent the roll to Dean Studios in Des Moines for processing. A few days later my package of prints arrived. Quickly I searched them for a good shot of me and my brother flying the kite. I never did get a picture of myself, but I did get a picture of trees, the top of the apartment house, and the roof on the West Street Grocery across the street. Oh, well, it was a good try. It took most of the afternoon to shoot up that roll of film.

"Trix" Cooney

How many of us will be remembered on this earth after we are dead? Not very many at all. I'm sure that probably no one else from Ames, Iowa, will remember a man named "Trix" Cooney. I never learned his real name.

When I graduated from the Cub Scouts to the Boy Scouts, Fred Brandner moved up to serve as my Scoutmaster. We held our troop meetings in the basement of the proposed addition to the Collegiate Methodist Church in "Dogtown." The Methodists had a church and wanted to expand but probably could not afford to do it all at once. They built a connecting link and a new basement to the west of the church. This they covered with a floor and then put rolled roofing on top to serve as a roof for the basement. This area was used by the Scouts for our meetings.

Once a year the troops from the college area met in the regular church basement for a Father-Son Banquet. My dad had to work nights at his job as janitor for Iowa State College, so he was never free to go with me. Mr. Brandner always invited me to go with him, as "My sons are now too old for Scouts." I was always ready to go with him.

The meal was served to all of the guests, as they were seated on the sides of long tables. One particular year I was seated near the stage area, so I would get a good view of the program. After the meal the awards were made, songs were sung, and usually one troop put on a demonstration. Sometimes it was rope lashing, another was rope tying, and sometimes it was on signalling.

Then this man, "Trix" Cooney, put on his magic act. I had always admired this man as he cracked eggs into his top hat and pulled out a rabbit, pulled handkerchiefs out of his sleeve, and found nickels behind the ears of several Scouts. He was dressed in a black tuxedo with velvet lapels and had a small portable folding table with a black drop cloth with the name "Trix Cooney" on the front.

This particular year, about the third time that I'd seen him, I was up very close so that I could see how he did the tricks. The harsh light from the spotlight showed, instead of the tricks, the shabby thread-bare suit, the patches where it had been repaired, and the creases on his face that made him look very old. I felt sorry for him but was still delighted with his magic acts.

Later, I saw him on the streets of Ames, and he looked about like any other person from Ames. On stage, with the audience roaring approval, he was a real magician. Thank you, Trix, after all of those unpaid

performances. I still have fond memories of us boys laughing and shrieking our pleasure with your performance at our annual Scout banquet.

Sunset Rock

My early day activities were closely tied to the Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs. Our good friends, the Brandners, started me in the Scouting program when Fred talked my mother into letting me join his Cub Scout den.

We usually met in the Brandner home on Lincolnway, usually on the front porch, where he would tell us what we would be working on next. Sometimes it was on knot tying, sometimes bird and tree identification, sometimes Indian lore, and other times we investigated signalling.

Mr. Brandner, as we called him, was a lean, pipe-smoking man, who spoke with a short clipped voice. He was a mathematics professor at the College, as we all called Iowa State. His two sons, Carl and Keith, were older than I by 3 or 4 years. We went hiking, packed bedrolls, and camped overnight several times. One time we camped at Lynn Fuherer Lodge, just west of the college golf course. We frequently hunted for wild flowers in what we called the "North Woods," which was the heavily wooded area just north of Woodland Avenue.

My favorite camping site was at Sunset Rock, located west of Ames. This area was reached by hiking along Oakland Avenue west to the end. Then we continued on gravel until the road turned sharply south, just west of Bill Steele's house. At the turn there was a path leading down the hill and to the north, which, Mr. Brandner informed us, was once the stagecoach trail between Ames and Boone.

This wooded area was beautiful. We hiked all over the hillsides, centering our activity near a large rock, partly buried, which was located on some high ground. This rock, Mr. Brandner explained, probably was moved here by an early glacier. It was certainly too big for anyone to move.

Here we camped overnight, cooking our food over an open fire, using the food that we had each carried with us. Mr. Brandner had earlier taught each of us how to roll a bedroll with our food inside and form it into a horseshoe shape. This tightly rolled blanket was then tied tightly around each end, and these ends were pulled together to form a horseshoe shape. The ends were tied with a short rope to keep them from separating. Usually we tied another short piece of rope around the roll in the middle to keep it from opening up. Since I put all of my food in the center of the roll, I tied two ropes around the middle, one on each side of the lump of food I was carrying.

This horseshoe pack was then fastened with straps around our shoulders, hanging down our backsides. Sometimes when we got tired of carrying the pack, we would put the strap across our foreheads and lean into the load. We carried our water in canteens. I did not have a Scout canteen, but Mr. Brandner somehow found one that I could borrow. He also on occasion paid my dues, when I did not have the money to pay that small amount.

On one trip to Sunset Rock I persuaded my dad to let me take his axe to chop the firewood. It was called an axe but was really a hatchet. It had a smaller head and a thinner and shorter handle than an axe. He reluctantly agreed after I pleaded with him. He recalled the many occasions when I had borrowed some tool of his to repair my bike or to build a tree house, and the tool was found all rusted in the yard some time later. I promised to be very careful.

"I'll be careful," I promised in anticipation of attacking the woods to cut down the trees needed to provide our fuel. I had the job to get the firewood for all night.

Mr. Brandner told me that I was not to cut down any trees. First, the firewood would be no good, as it was "wet" and took a long time to dry down. Secondly, and most important, was that it took a long time to make a tree but only a short time to cut one down. I was to use broken limbs and downed trees only. This

was not as exciting a prospect as felling a big timber and cutting it up for firewood, but I did learn to respect all living things.

I dragged in the wood which was in abundance near Sunset Rock. I built up a nice roaring fire and continued to pile up the wood in a neat pile near the fire for our later use. I found it very hard to cut through a very big limb, even if it was a dry one. After supper was over, I continued to lay in an adequate supply of wood. I wanted enough to keep the wolves and bears away if they came during the night. I really thought there were such animals in these woods, even though I had never seen tracks or other evidence. The woods might be full of them, especially after dark.

When my work was done, I carefully placed the hatchet on the pile of wood to keep it out of the dirt. Then we all went off to play "Capture the Flag" after choosing sides. The night of activity was capped off around the fire, as we sang songs like "My Darling Clementine" and "She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain When She Comes." As campfire slowly died, we listened to Mr. Brandner tell us Indian lore and ghostly stories.

When he finally stood up and tapped out his pipe, he said, "All right now, it is time to turn in. We want to get up early when the birds get up and see how many different birds we can find." The open air and the smoke from the fire made me sleepy, so I curled up in my blanket, put my jacket under my head for a pillow, and drifted off to sleep.

Fortunately during the night we were not attacked by the wolves. I felt that my fire kept them all at bay, but I said nothing about it in the morning. I scurried around to rebuild the fire which had died out. There was only a pile of warm ashes on the ground. I looked for the hatchet, but it was not there. I asked, "Mr. Brandner, have you seen my Dad's hatchet anywhere?" He said, "Nope, but I'll help you look." We all turned out to search as each kid denied that he'd used it. Finally, Mr. Brandner took a long stick and dragged it through the ashes and pushed out the head of the hatchet. The handle had been burned off.

I knew that I was in real trouble. My dad's worst predictions had come true. I could not be trusted to take care of his tools. We built up the fire, cooked our breakfast, went bird watching, and then returned "to break camp." Mr. Brandner said that the hatchet head had been ruined as it had lost its "temper." I didn't know what he meant, so I asked him what that was. As he explained it to all of us, he rebuilt the fire, using all of the rest of the firewood. Then he carefully placed the hatchet head in the middle of the fire. I was told to empty his coffee pot and fill it with cold water from the stream below the hill.

After the fire had super-heated the hatchet head and it was very hot, he took two sticks and pushed the head out of the fire and worked a sharp stick down the hole where the handle should have been. Then he carefully carried the hot head to the coffee pot and dropped it into the cool water. The great cloud of steam poured out as the water sizzled. After a time he emptied the pot onto the ground, and, after allowing it to cool, he gave it to me and told me to tell my dad what had happened. He told me to tell him that he had attempted to "re-temper" it in the fire.

My dad also became "re-tempered" when he discovered that I had ruined another one of his tools due to my carelessness.

Several years ago, as an adult, I returned to search for the area, where the stagecoach road started. The area is now built up with homes. Without much success I walked back and forth below several houses in search of this piece of my past. Dogs were barking due to my intrusion on their space. A lady was hanging up laundry and watched me suspiciously for a time. I decided that I'd better give up and leave before someone called the police. They would have a tough time believing my response to a question about my presence there - that "I'm looking for the stagecoach trail to Sunset Rock."

Chapter Five

More of Life on West Street

Jensen Gardens

As I got a bit older, I was able to roam a larger region of Ames. One time another friend and I got on our bicycles and rode north on Hyland Avenue, a cinder road, to Ontario Street, covered with gravel. We continued to ride west on Ontario past where the houses ended. About two miles west we came to Jensen Gardens. Here, a man had a truck garden and a filling station. I knew about Jensen Gardens, because an old truck filled with vegetables regularly came to the grocery store across the street from our house. Jensen raised the vegetables and distributed them to all of the stores in Ames. At that time, before supermarkets, Ames had many, many neighborhood stores.

I saw the old panel truck parked beside the station, so I told my friend that I wanted to stop. We went inside, and I talked to Mr. Jensen about his gardens. He went outside and showed me where his produce was planted. I told him I knew him from his stops at Peyton's store, the West Street Grocery. He had a pinball machine in the station, and I noticed that it had 2 free games on it. In those days there was no gambling, but the pinball machines could record free games as prizes. I always checked all of the pinball machines and sometimes found that someone had quit before they used up all of the free games.

This was too good to be true. I had a nickel but did not want to waste it on the machine. Now I could play one game and my friend, the other. While he was playing, I decided to spend my nickel on pop. I lifted the lid on the pop cooler and looked at the caps to decide which kind of pop to buy. I saw one marked Dr. Pepper. This was something I had never tasted, so I tried it. I lifted the bottle out of the cool water, put the bottle into an opener on the corner of the cooler, and lifted the bottle to my mouth. The taste was different from what I expected. To me, it tasted like prune juice. But, I liked it. This was my first Dr. Pepper. Since my friend did not have a nickel, I shared the last part of the bottle with him.

After our time in the filling station, we got on our bikes and rode home just as darkness arrived. Now I knew that there was a tiny town called Ontario, and that it was here that Jensen had his garden. Many years later, Jensen's truck was parked at West Street Grocery. He left it with the motor running as he took boxes of produce out of the back. When he was in the store, the truck started rolling back across the intersection of Campus and West Streets. It jumped the curb and backed into the foundation of the house at the northeast corner. Blocks from the foundation fell in on a student that lived in a basement room. No one was hurt. The truck was pulled from the foundation by a wrecker, but it was able to be driven off on its own power. The basement wall was repaired. Even today, as I pass that corner, I check to see if I can tell where the truck had hit the house.

Too Old At Nine

David was two years old; Gloria was four. Both were very cute when they were all cleaned up and dressed in their "good" clothes. In my hometown, Ames, some Iowa State College home economics girls took courses in Home Management. Several large, ugly grey-colored frame houses in the north part of the campus became home for 10 or 12 of them at a time. They lived together, cooking, cleaning, and managing the house together for a quarter. There were three quarters in a school year at that time. Here the students were to develop and sharpen their skills as homemakers.

One requirement of all of the girls was to learn some elements of child care. Each girl was required to find one or two small children to care for one day, observing and recording their activities. Since we lived only two blocks west of West Gate, on West Street, the girls quickly located Gloria and David. The girls came first to talk to Mom and size up the kids. When they had permission to borrow them for a day, the arrangements about time were made. This was a blessing to my harried mother, who still had two other

kids to care for. One was Betsey, who was very ill. The other, of course, was me, one of the nicest kids you could ever meet.

On Saturday at the appointed time the girls would arrive to pick up the two kids. Sometimes there were two girls; sometimes only one. As they left the house hand-in-hand, the girls would call back to Mom that they'd be back at such-and-such time. Mom always yelled, "Now you kids behave yourselves." The activities they were taken to usually included playgrounds, where the girls never seemed to tire of pushing them in the swings, walks in the woods, trips around Lake Laverne, trips on the bus to the animal cages in Brookside Park, to some restaurant for lunch, and for bike rides. The kids sat on the bar while the girls pedaled. One of the best places of all to stop was Moore's Dairy on 5th Street downtown across from the high school. Here the best treat was a hot fudge sundae with nuts. The counter was horseshoe shaped with seats on posts that turned and squeaked. The girls that waited on customers were on a lower level and inside the horseshoe. The sundaes were wonderful.

Sometimes, the kids were taken to one feature at the Capital, the rundown theater at the east end of Main Street, really 4th Street. The paint was caked from the many chipped layers coated on freshly each fall. Inside was the wonderful world of Westerns with Tom Mix, Roy and Dale Rogers, and Randolph Scott. I quickly learned that the good guys wore white hats, usually won in the end after a bleak outlook earlier. They ruined the whole movie by "kissing the girl."

Waiting for Gloria and David to return from the exciting day's activities, I would sit on the front window seat and watch for the bus to stop at the corner, for the bike to pull up in front of the house, or for the group to chatter down the street laughing, and tugging on each other. I was always eager to learn what fun thing they had done that day. They would eventually appear at the door, slightly dirty, clothes quite rumpled, and with some colorful toy in their hands - a ball, a yo-yo, a stick holding aloft a whirl-a-gig, or a balloon. Whatever it was, it was brightly colored in reds, yellows, greens, and blues. Both kids would start talking excitedly to Mother at once, tugging at her apron for attention. The home management girls would thank Mom for letting them have the kids. They would return to their home management house to transcribe their notes into reports for the class.

Another week brought another girl, sometimes two, with each taking one of the kids in different directions. No one ever wanted me. No one ever came to Mom to ask if she had a nine-year-old boy, who wanted to have a good time some Saturday morning. No one appeared to offer a day of fun, food, and play. No one ever offered to buy me a colorful yo-yo. Life just didn't seem fair.

One week, when I heard from Mom that three girls would be coming for the kids, I got the bright idea that I'd try to make myself so presentable that one of them could not resist me. After all, the girls would surely want more than just two kids to observe. I would be charming, cheerful, pleasant, and adorable if they only gave me a chance.

After Mom gave baths, first to Gloria and then to David, I waited until she went into the bedroom to get clothes on them. Then I hurried into the bathroom, added hot water to the tub from the kettle on the stove that was left over after the last bath, and climbed in to bathe myself. This was probably the first time that I ever took a bath without being asked or threatened. Then I hurried into the front bedroom and dressed in the best clothes I could find in the drawer. They were clean and almost without holes. Next I hurried back into the bathroom where I opened the cabinet above the sink and took out the bottle of Fitch's Hair Oil, a thin, greasy, red-colored liquid to rub generously over my hair. Usually my normally very straight hair stuck up every which way, but today it was slicked down. I smelled a bit like the rag I used when I put on the furniture polish. Come to think of it, they were both about the same color and consistency.

Then I ran to the front screen door to watch for the girls to arrive. Waiting there with anticipation about the possibility of my being chosen must have been the same as puppies in a pet shop eagerly wanting to be adopted. My sweaty forehead touched the screen several times, leaving a crisscross pattern of dirt on it. One of my spring cleaning jobs was to wash the screen doors. This was autumn and the summer dust was stuck generously to the screen. David appeared at the door, laughing, as he spotted my forehead. I ran to

the bathroom to check in the mirror. A quick swipe with the already wet wash cloth, still in the dirty tub, removed the pattern. I ran back to wait at the door.

As the girls appeared crossing Campus Street I called, "Mom, they are here." Mom called back that she was struggling with Gloria's hair, removing the tangles, which she called "rats." Gloria fussed a lot as Mom jerked her head with each tug on the brush. I stood at the head of the group as the girls got to the porch. I opened the door and invited them in. "I'm Edwin. This here is David. Gloria is getting her hair combed," I informed them. By this time Mom arrived with a slightly tearful Gloria. I smiled my best smile, scrunched down in my clothes to look as small as I could. I hoped against hope that they would decide to take me, too. I would even promise to be real nice.

Mom shooed the two kids out the door behind the three girls after they agreed on the return time. I had even said, "I would sure like to see the new movie at the Capitol Theater, today." They didn't pick up on it. I wanted to go so badly that I could taste it. I could picture myself in the very front row, in the exact center of the dark theater. I'd be so close that I'd close my eyes as the horse and rider galloped along the edge of a cliff, as the train charged right into the theater toward my seat, or as the hail of bullets flew right past my head on both sides. As the girls got to the top of the steps down our front embankment, I called out desperately, "Are you sure you don't want one more kid?"

"Ed--win, be quiet," mother scolded. "Behave yourself."

"Maybe some other time," one of them called back as they descended the steps.

"Some other time" never came. I was too old before my time, missing out on so much fun with the home management class.

Twenty-Five Cent Fillings

The lack of money during the Depression days did not provide for the regular six-month checkups we all experience today. Naturally, we kids would have problems with our teeth. I must admit that a toothbrush seldom touched my teeth in those days. I figured they were "good for life." If a tooth did not hurt, then I had no problems.

One day we were told in class that we were going to have our teeth checked by the school nurse. One at a time, we left class and went to the nurse's office at Welch School. I sat in a chair as the nurse adjusted a gooseneck lamp to shine into my mouth. She had a pick that she used to move my tongue out of the way as she explored my teeth. As she found something wrong, she made a note on a yellow card. Then she filled in my name and signed the card. I was told to have my mother call the school about the card she gave me to take home.

Mother called and was told that I had several cavities. The nurse explained that families that could not afford to go to the dentist could go to a certain dentist on Main Street. If we had a yellow school card, he would fill our teeth as needed for 25 cents per tooth. Mother called the dentist and made an appointment for me. On the day of the appointment, I was given two bus tokens and directions to the dentist. I took the bus to Kellogg and 5th Street. Then I walked along Main Street until I found the sign for the dentist. He was located on the second floor above some retail store. I walked up the steps and went into the office. The receptionist took my card and told me to be seated. I can't recall why Mother did not go with me. This was my first trip to a dentist, and I was a bit afraid.

The dentist had me sit in his chair and examined my teeth. Then he told me that he was going to give me three fillings. He put a fluff of cotton on the cable that drove the drilling machine. I was told to watch the cotton go round and round while he worked on me. Today I realize that he did this without benefit of Novocaine. I did not expect to have it hurt so much. He was rather gruff and scolded me for wincing as he drilled. I sat and took it because I had no choice.

When I was finished, I got a glass of water to swish around my mouth. This I spit into a porcelain bowl that had water constantly running in it. I also recall seeing a gas flame in a part of the machine. I don't know what that was used for. He never needed it for me. The dentist signed the card and I was told to return it to the school nurse. Then he told me that the fee was 75 cents, 25 cents for each tooth. I told him that I did not have any money, but that Mom would come and pay him. I walked back down the stairs and walked to the bus corner. I boarded the next Crosstown bus and took it until I got to the corner of Lincoln Way and Sheldon Avenue. This was only a half-block from Welch School. I turned in the card to the nurse and went back to the classroom.

I told my mother that she owed the dentist 75 cents for my fillings. She told me that she would take the bus downtown in a few days to pay bills and that she would pay him then. I rode along with her and showed her how to get to the office. Then we continued going from store to store paying our bills.

Today I cannot imagine two things about this story. First, I can't imagine sending a kid of about nine years old to the dentist for his first visit alone. Then I can't imagine getting a filling for 25 cents. As Dr. Haynes worked on my teeth one time, I told him, between times he had his fists in my mouth, about my quarter fillings. He only smiled when I asked if I could still get a filling today for 25 cents.

Snow White on the Clyde Williams Field

The exact year escapes me now, but in the fall of the year that the movie "Snow White" was popular, Mr. Edgar, the band director at Iowa State College, decided to build his half-time show around Snow White. He needed some dwarfs, so he called Mr. Brandner, my Cub Scout leader, for seven boys. I was one of the boys that Mr. Brandner contacted. I was thrilled.

We all met at Mr. Brandner's house on Lincoln Way, the next door west of the Delta Tau Delta house. He explained what was needed. Then he assigned a boy to each of the seven dwarfs. I was to play Sleepy. Mother helped me with a costume. We all appeared on the field one afternoon for a walk-through. The band members were there; Snow White, an older school girl, took the field at the right time; and we were to all march along in time to the music as the band played the song, "Hi Ho, Hi Ho, It's Off To Work We Go."

Several times we performed under the watchful eye of some college student in charge of us. She told us that we needed to wind our way through the band members, following Snow White. At the end of the number, we were all to take a bow.

On the next Saturday afternoon, we all gathered in a room under the east side of the stadium. Here we got dressed in our costumes and dopey hats. Before half-time, we followed the student to our place in front of the east bleacher, (that was the home team bleacher) and waited our time. It was a real thrill for me to see the crowd of people, watch the band gather in front of us, and wait until the football team ran off the field.

We all performed well. I skipped as we followed in single file. I also sang the song as the band played even though I was the only person who could hear me. At the end of the number we stood in a line on the west side for introductions. When the announcer said, "Sleepy," I stepped forward and bowed. Then I backed up into line again.

The Pirate

The next year, some of us were called upon again. This time, Mr. Brandner told me that I was to be dressed like a pirate. When I went home my mother began making plans for a pirate costume. She made a big gold colored sash to tie around my waist. Dad got into the act and made me a pirate's sword. It was a curved blade sword that he carved himself, after cutting out the general shape. It was really neat. He painted the handle a dark color and the curved blade, silver.

I was really proud of my costume. At the rehearsal with the band, everyone thought that I had a good costume. The selection which the band played didn't make an impression. I don't remember what it was,

but I do recall being on the field again with the big crowds in the stands. That was the end of my performance with the college band.

My Problems With A Fly

When I was in 6th grade I graduated from carrying the Ames Daily Tribune six days a week after school to carrying the Des Moines Register early in the morning seven days a week. I would get up at about 5:30 a.m. and either walk or ride my bike to the newspaper office. It was located below the College Pipe Shop at the corner of Welch Avenue and Lincoln Way.

I was usually still half asleep as I made the daily trek. One fine summer day I was walking down the hill from Sheldon Avenue on the south side of Lincoln Way. I was very sleepy yet, so I was yawning as I walked. One time when I had a big yawn, a fly flew into my mouth. I snapped my mouth shut in shock as I wondered what I had in my mouth. As I walked along I felt it crawl around the roof of my mouth. I stuck my finger in to try to flick it out but only succeeded in gagging myself.

By now I was wide awake. I breathed a deep breath and formed my mouth in a tight circle and blew all of the air out of my lungs, thinking that I could blow the fly out. No luck. By now he was crawling down the back of my throat. I gathered saliva in my mouth and tried to spit it out. I waited, hoping that the fly was gone, but then I felt him crawling around in my throat again. I blew, spit, and blew some more. The fly was driving me nuts.

I bent over thinking that I could get more power behind my breath, as I blew as hard as I could. Then I waited. I thought that I was finally successful. Then I could feel him crawling back up my throat again. By now, I really did not know what to do. But I knew that I had to do something soon. I worked my mouth to try to gather a lot of saliva. I imagined that I was ready to eat a lemon. That always brought water to my mouth. After I had a large amount of saliva, I quickly swallowed it. I waited again. Finally I had success, or so I thought. I began to feel him crawling again.

I ran to the corner of Welch where there was a drinking fountain. I turned the handle and drank and drank. After I stopped, I stood there waiting for the crawl that never came again. I stopped the fly by swallowing it. Ugh!!

Cooking Macaroni

One time in my early Boy Scout experiences, the troop went on an overnight hike to Lynn Fuhrer Lodge, a cabin located west of the college golf course. This was in the winter so the cabin was a warm spot to camp out. We each hiked to the cabin carrying our supplies in the horseshoe shaped pack that we slung over our shoulder. We made up our bunks and then proceeded to sweep out the cabin while some went looking for firewood. The cabin had six sets of heavy wooden bunk beds. There were about 10 of us in the troop, so there were bunks for all of us plus the scoutmaster.

The cabin had a fireplace and also a cook stove. We stacked the wood beside the fireplace and then split up some in smaller pieces to put in the stove. After camp was secure, we all went outside for many activities, ending with a huge snowball fight. We broke into two camps, built snow forts and packed as many hard snowballs as we could in anticipation of the routing we would give the other side. I was usually a poor shot and got clobbered by the opponents and chased back to the safety of the fort.

Finally, time was called and duties for the night were assigned. I was on the cooking detail. The menu included macaroni and some kind of meat. One boy was assigned the task of boiling the meat. I was assigned the macaroni. I got a pot, put water in it, and put it on the stove. After the fire was burning well, the water started to boil. I took the entire package of macaroni and poured it into the water. After a time of standing there and stirring, I decided that the fun was all outside. I joined in and abandoned the cooking for a while. The leader cautioned me, but I assured him that I had everything under control. We were playing softball in the snow. Whenever we changed sides, I ran in and stirred the macaroni.

Soon it became dark so we all trooped inside and took off our boots. I checked the macaroni while the other cook checked his meat. The meat looked great as he stuck a huge fork into it and put it on a plate. My macaroni, however, was not in any shape to eat. I had cooked it for an hour and it had all turned to soup. It was decided that we had to eat it anyway, so we poured it over the meat just like gravy. Some poured theirs on a slice of bread.

I was relieved of my cooking duties for the rest of the camp.

Armstrong's Melon Patch

On some warm summer nights my mother would tell my dad, "Seward, why don't we put the kids in the Ford and go to Armstrongs and get a melon." I ran to help all I could as I looked forward to the trip. My sister, Betsey, who was one year younger than I, ran with me to open the door of the 1929 Ford Sedan, laid down the back of the seat and we climbed over each other to get into the back.

Dad started the car, cranking it many times, and we drove east on the Lincoln Highway, U.S. 30. About two miles east of Ames there was a low flat parcel of land. A lone dark green shack was located on the north side of the road with doors pushed open and propped up on three sides. This formed a counter space where customers could stand. Above the building was a hand-lettered board that was painted "Armstrong's Melon Patch."

A driver could pull off the road anywhere and park the car beside the road. Dad helped Mother get out as we kids were jumping up and down to get out. We ran ahead and got under the propped up doors and stood on our tip-toes to see over the counter. One strand of electrical cord was hung in the center of the shed with bare bulbs hanging down, providing the illumination needed at night. This cord was attached to a pole near the east side of the building. Inside in the center was a very long horse tank of cold water pumped in from a well. It was filled with two kinds of melons - the roundish dark green kind, which I like the best, and the elongated striped light and dark green kind that many others liked.

"Are your melons any good today?" my mother asked. That question in various forms was asked of all merchants that she dealt with, and it embarrassed me. Did she really expect them to say, "No, not today?"

"Plug that round green one over there, please," she asked as she tried to find the best of the melons. The man behind the counter, who I assumed was Mr. Armstrong, took a large butcher knife from the counter area where it sat on oilcloth. He wiped it clean with a damp cloth he kept there. Flies were in abundance, and this seemed to take care of them. He plunged the knife deeply into the melon in four swift stabs, angled inward. Then he deftly extracted a nice pyramid-shaped piece of melon for Mother to taste.

"Pretty good," she replied. "I think that we'll take this one," as she offered part of the plug to Dad to confirm the goodness. The end of the plug was returned to Mr. Armstrong, and he inserted it back into the melon and handed it over to Dad. Mother settled up by paying with coins she carried tied up in the corner of her handkerchief. I seldom saw her carry a purse. Usually our money, even paper money, was carried in a handkerchief.

"Here, folks, let the kids have some," Mr. Armstrong would say as he cut up a smaller melon and put it up on the counter. He would always do this, so I waited eagerly. I grabbed one of the pieces and took off to the west side of the shed, where he had some knocked-together tables and benches. These were made of all kinds of pieces of wood and each year were given a fresh new coat of the ugly dark green paint. The paint surface was rough as previous layers had chipped off in several places, making a random rough pattern of different dark colors of green.

Dad would put the other piece of melon on the rickety table, while Mother would try to clean off the benches. If they were muddy, she would send Dad to the Ford to get some newspapers to sit on. We always came prepared. Dad would take one of the many butcher knives, some with home-made handles, and proceeded to hack the pieces of melon into a manageable size. I scouted the other tables for the metal

cylindrical cans that served as salt shakers. These had holes punched in the top and the salt flowed out freely.

I usually stood and ate with both hands, leaning forward so that the juices would not get my shirt wet. My face and hands were a sticky mess when I finished. Mother and Betsey were neater and required smaller pieces. I filled my mouth with large bites and then, using my tongue, worked the seeds forward in my mouth. Then, blowing hard, I spit them out into the weeds trying to see how far I could spit them. Mother and Betsey would spit them quietly into their hands and then deposit them into the trash barrels Armstrong provided. I had more fun than they did, but I got reprimanded each time.

After we had cleaned up our mess, we wiped the table tops clean with the damp dirty cloths that were hanging on a pole for that purpose.

"Thanks for the melon," we called back as we got into the Ford. Since I was the oldest I got instructions each time to hold the melon in my lap so that it would not roll around and get cracked open. I cradled it in my lap. The cool melon felt good to hold on a hot summer night.

My face was still sticky from the melon and my hands were getting grimy as they dried. My mind reflected on the good taste, and I anticipated the enjoyment to come when we got our own melon home from another trip to the "Armstrong Melon Patch."

Skiing in My Backyard

I have never been very athletic, but I usually tried about any sport that looked like fun. One time a neighbor gave me a used set of skis that his children no longer used. They were two long slats with the front ends turned up. A strap was fastened through a hole in the skis that I could push my shoe into. The straps were adjustable to fit the shoe size. I did not have the ski poles, but I went to the basement and found an old broom handle.

There was absolutely no place around my house where I could ski. We lived on an embankment with concrete walls. I walked behind the garages and looked down a slope that ran through backyards. "This might work," I thought to myself. I put the skis down and worked my shoes into the straps. Then I stood up with my one ski pole, the broom handle. I put it between my legs and shoved. The slope was not great, but I found that once I was moving, I had no way to stop, or so I thought.

In those days, all families dried their clothes outdoors on clotheslines. The lines were strung between to poles. A heavy wire was stretched between them. Many times, the wire had passed through a hole in one end of a heavy pole. This pole was put on the ground to hold the wire up as it sagged under the weight of the wet clothes. After the clothes were removed, the owner usually moved the bottom of the pole to one side to let the line sag.

As I came skiing down the hill with my "ski pole broom handle" between my legs, I saw the slack clothesline ahead of me. There was nothing I could do to stop. I ducked down to try to go under the wire, but I could not get low enough. The wire caught me in the neck. My feet continued north, but my head stayed where it was. Down I went in a heap. That knocked the wind out of me. I lay on the ground gasping for air for a long time. No one saw me and no one came to my aid. Gradually, I recovered enough to get up. I bent over and rubbed my neck as I started walking around to retrieve my skis and my broom handle. I walked the block to my house, took my coat off on the porch, and went inside. I put the skis in the storeroom, and the broom handle back in the basement. My skiing days were over!

One Dollar Glasses

One day in school, the school nurse scheduled check-ups for all of the kids. She set up a chair in the nurse's office in Welch School. Then we all left the classroom, one at a time, and went to her office. She had an eye chart hung on the wall and had most of the lights off. One light shined on the chart. She gave

me a card to hold over one eye. I was instructed to read as far down the chart as I could. The top letter was an "E" which everyone could read. I read down about three or four lines. Then she had me switch the card to cover the other eye and repeat the reading. At the end of the examination, she told me that I needed to have my eyes examined by an eye doctor.

Again, as with the dentist, I was told that if we could not afford to get glasses in these Depression years, I could take a card to the eye doctor and get a cheaper rate. I took the information home and Mother called the eye doctor for an appointment. By this time I was in eighth grade. The eye doctor had an office in the Cranford Apartment Building in Campustown.

I took my card with me and walked to the office. It was on the second floor which I entered by going up a set of stairs between two businesses on Lincoln Way. I was ushered into his office which was quite dark. He put some drops in my eyes and told me to sit for a while as my pupils dilated. After a time, he returned and showed me many charts on the wall and asked me lots of questions. Then he put an apparatus next to my eyes into which he put different lenses. Again, many questions about which is better, "one" or "two." After a while, it got hard to tell the difference between them.

He told me that I had far-sighted astigmatism, which he could correct with glasses. There were many frames on his wall, but I did not get a choice since I was getting cheap glasses. He picked up a wire frame and had me try it on. Then he measured distances to my ears and finally bent the part that goes around my ears until he got them to fit.

He told me that my glasses would be ready in a week. I was instructed to bring \$1.00 with me after school, and I would get my glasses. As I was ready to leave, he put a pair of glasses with colored lenses on me. He bent them to fit. I was told that I could not go out in the bright sunlight with my pupils dilated. The glasses would protect me until my pupils again became normal. These glasses were only a loaner pair, which he wanted me to bring back to him the next day.

At first, I thought that wearing glasses was "cool." I imagined that they made me look so much older. Then, as other kids that I looked at had better looking glasses, I began to feel that my glasses were no good. I had to wear them to school, but when I got home and went out to play, I took them off. These glasses lasted me until I got to high school. By that time I was working and paid for half of the next pair myself. This way I got to select the frames that I thought looked better.

Today, as I reflect back, I am so grateful for the people that arranged for me to get my glasses at a greatly reduced price. I suspect that the eye doctor donated his time and some service club, like the Lions, paid for the glasses.

Rope Trick

I did not set out in life to play tricks on people. However, some just naturally came up. This is one of them. When I was eleven years old, I was messing around with another boy on Lincoln Way about dusk one evening. I don't remember now who the boy was. World War II was on, so there was not much traffic on the highway. At that time the Lincoln Highway, U. S. 30, was only two lanes wide through Ames.

We were in the middle of the block between Hyland and Campus Avenue, which was about two blocks from home. I saw a car coming from the west and got the bright idea of how we could have some fun. I went through my plans, and then waited with the other boy until another car came along.

As the car neared, I acted like I was pulling on a rope and ran across the highway. The other boy acted like he was holding the other end. As the car neared, we both pulled hard on the imaginary rope and dug in our feet. The car screeched to a stop. As the man got out of the car, we both ran away in different directions. I recall the man getting quite angry at us. He yelled some obscenities at us, got back in his car, and drove off.

Then we met again and waited for the next car. We had great fun playing this stunt on the drivers. We quit when it got too dark, as the drivers could not see us in time and drove right on through. I recall meeting with this boy one more night to do it again. We had to sit and wait for just the right lighting conditions. After several more stops, we left the scene as we were fearful that someone might call the police.

Oleomargarine

Mother always cooked and baked things using real butter. Gobs of butter were melted by me to put on the dishpan of popcorn that my brother, David, and I liked so much. One problem, however, was the cost. When oleomargarine was introduced, Mother decided to use it instead of butter. One problem existed, though. The margarine was white in color. The dairy people objected to margarine as a substitute for butter and they had the Iowa legislature "in their corner." A law was passed that prevented colored oleomargarine from being sold in Iowa.

At first, when we bought a pound of margarine, we were given a small packet of coloring. Mother would put the margarine in a crock, sprinkle the coloring on top, and then knead the coloring into the margarine. This was a slow and messy project. Sometimes, when she was busy cooking, she drafted me to do the kneading. I hated the job, as my hands got so messy. (This was another job that I was given with the instructions to "go wash your hands first.")

Later, the coloring, in liquid form, came in a capsule along with the white margarine block. This time we squeezed the capsule to release the coloring. Still, it had to be kneaded. Mother had a butter mold that we put the squished up margarine into before it went into the ice box. This allowed it to take on a rectangular shape. If we were in a hurry, we would just scrape the kneaded margarine into a bowl and use it that way.

The last big improvement took some of the mess out of the mixing. The margarine came in a clear bag. The capsule was inside the bag, too. The capsule was squeezed to release the liquid. Then the kneading began. After the margarine was completely colored, a corner of the bag was cut diagonally. Then the colored margarine could be squeezed out into the mold or bowl. Some margarine stuck to the inside of the bag so Mother usually held the bag in a pan of boiling water to melt what remained. This she poured into a container to be used for cooking.

When our farm friends, the Engstroms, came to our house to stay for a short-course at Iowa State College, they always brought along some farm fresh butter for us. This was a real treat. Mother reserved much of the real butter for baking, but David and I insisted on using some for our popcorn.

Today, it seems silly to have to work that hard to get colored margarine. We see all kinds of margarine in the stores. It is touted to be more healthy than butter. The margarine comes in solid blocks, in four separately wrapped sticks, and now even in tubs. "Light margarine" is sold in tubs, but I have found that it contains a lot of water. Maybe that is what they mean by "Light."

Beatty's Store on Knapp Street

When we were in Junior High in Welch School we played at the playground of the Louise Crawford Grade School. This put us all in close proximity to Beatty's Store on Knapp Street. Beatty had a small, neighborhood grocery store that also sold ice cream and loose meat sandwiches. Beatty was always grumpy about having kids cut across his lot to the west of the store or bothering him in his store. Whenever I saw him swatting flies, I used to tease him that he was just going to gather them up and put them into his loose meat pan. Some might think this stunt pulled by Bob Loomis and Max Wilhelm was not very nice, but it was very funny.

Max found an old practice hand grenade (I thought that it was a gun but Max confirmed that it was the hand grenade). He and Bob made an elaborate map with a drawing of Beatty's lot. They marked a spot which was labeled Oak Tree. Then they put several "X's" on the map. This map was then folded many times and smeared with a bit of oil from the garage so that it looked old. The night before the great hunt, they

sneaked into Beatty's lot and carefully dug up a small bit of sod, then buried the package wrapped in oilcloth, and restored the sod. The next day at school they showed the treasure map that "Max found in a can in the garage." We were all in awe of such a wonder. Late that afternoon, we all went up to Beatty's lot and one of them located the tree and positioned the map to coincide with the lot. Then he carefully paced off the correct number of steps to one of the "X" marks on the map. There, the other carefully dug up the sod and "discovered" the treasure which was carefully unwrapped. I was watching in wonder. Imagine what might be under the other "X" marks on the map.

Max and Bob then told us that we could have the map; they had gotten their treasure, and they had to go home. Imagine the rush of kids for shovels. They all returned and dug up Beatty's lot. When Beatty found the holes in his lot, he was furious. I did not get to dig because it was too far from Beatty's Store to my home. I shared a shovel with someone else. After several dry holes we all discovered that it was a trick perpetrated by Max and Bob.

Many years later, Max reminisced "My initial reaction to the story about the buried gun was blank. Then it popped into my mind. Bob Loomis and I buried a fake practice hand grenade, which I had found in my grandparents' attic. We hid it in the side lot next to Beatty's Store and had half the kids in the neighborhood digging up the lot, looking for other war relics and treasure. It was not very nice of us, but Bob and I had a good laugh. I still have that fake hand grenade which I just removed recently from where it has been hanging for fifty some years. It was employed as a latch weight in the secret panel of my old attic room."

"Uncle Stan and Cowboy Ken"

Max Wilhelm and I worked up a skit that we presented to the classes at Welch. At the time, a very popular radio show on WHO was "Uncle Stan and Cowboy Ken," which was broadcast early every morning Monday through Friday. Max was Uncle Stan and I was Cowboy Ken. We did the pick-up parade, where we encourage all of the boys and girls in radio land to pick up their rooms. The title song was something like this..... "Good Morning, boys and girls. We're here to bring you fun. We hope you're feeling bright and gay. Bring up your glass of milk and your Cocoa Wheats, down by the radio...." I strummed my guitar while we both sang the song. When we got to the part about bringing up your "Cocoa Wheats" I would gag and gag. We had a dressing race to see if the boys or the girls would get dressed first. When I was little, it always bothered me to have them announce that they could see one little boy that was not completely dressed yet. I thought then that they somehow might be able to see me over the radio. Jokes were told, and we sang and strummed a few songs. On occasion, the parrot "Cracker," played by Barbara Weber, would squawk. We did get a line in the Nosey News, the eighth grade paper, that Max and Edwin really ought to be on the radio.

By the way, I tried to eat the Cocoa Wheats only once. It was awful. It was like cream of wheat but had a chocolate flavoring, and I hated Cream of Wheat.

Tailor Made Cigarettes

While I was working in Spriggs Pharmacy, I became aware of the large number of cigarettes that we sold. The most popular brand at the time was Lucky Strikes, followed by Camels, Chesterfields, and Old Golds. When I visit a store selling cigarettes today, I find brands that were unheard of before, except for Camels. It appears to me that the popularity of the brand is directly proportional to the amount of advertising that pushes a certain brand. While I was in college, there were always students hired to be campus representatives for various brands. Many times they gave away small packages of cigarettes; some packages held four cigarettes, others only two. Most of the major tobacco companies had ads in the student newspaper.

Before World War II and in the early days of war, cigarettes were available everywhere. We sold many cartons each week. I delivered a carton of Luckies each week to Amy Moats, a neighbor lady. As the war progressed, the cigarettes became scarce. Every Tuesday the jobber delivered our allotment of cigarettes.

Each time the customers would come in and inquire if we had any Luckies, Camels, or Chesterfields. We always had some obscure brands on the shelves, but people usually bought them only when they were desperate. One brand particularly hard to sell was Chelsea. Wings were not far behind. The popular brands never made it to the display cases.

I was instructed to unpack the cigarettes in the back storeroom and then fill the orders for our best customers. Mr. Spriggs told me that since they had all previously bought their cigarettes from him, he would give them first priority. Next I was to set aside a couple of cartons of each of the major brands in case we had a special request. Whatever was left over was then put on the shelves. These packages would be sold instantly.

When I began working in the store, the price of cigarettes was 19 cents a package. I do recall when the price was raised to 21 cents. Oh, what a lot of complaints we had! Then they went up to 23 cents, and I recall one man telling me that when they got to 25 cents he was going to quit smoking. The price soon went up to 25 cents, but I observed him continuing to come in.

My start on cigarettes was at the time that I left Ames for the army service. I bought a package of Old Gold cigarettes from a downtown drug store which was across the street from the Sheldon-Munn Hotel. I boarded the bus and sat in the back so that I could smoke. I put the first cigarette in my mouth, lit it, and then tried to inhale. What a coughing fit! By the time I arrived at Fort Snelling, I could smoke a cigarette like a pro, except that I did not inhale. It took me quite a time to master that trick without coughing.

By the time I got to Japan, I found that the cigarettes were the cheapest ever. They cost me 10 cents a package in the PX. That was even cheaper than what we paid in the states. Cheap cigarettes, opportunity to smoke away from the prying eyes of my parents, and the feeling of being really mature caused me to get hooked on tobacco. I later regretted this. While attending summer school in New Orleans with my family, I gave up cigarettes and tried a pipe instead. What an awful taste I got when the tobacco juices ran down the pipe stem. As we returned from summer school, I felt the need for cigarettes as I drove home, so I surrendered my campaign.

By 1967 I was smoking a package a day, coughing heavily each morning, and wishing that I could quit. I tried a couple of schemes that Leonard Thompson told me about at his pharmacy. I tore up 20 slips of paper and wrote the numbers from 1 to 20 on them. These slips were then put in a coffee can. Each morning I would remove a slip and the number of cigarettes that I could smoke each day was determined. As long as the number was 19 or 20 I was okay. If I drew out a low number, say 6, I found that I put that slip back in and then drew again until I got a higher number. As the numbers were to be removed from the can, I soon had only little numbers left. That is when I gave up on that scheme.

Thompson Pharmacy even sold what were called "Cabbage" cigarettes. They were really cigarettes made of some substitute vegetable leaf. That way there was no nicotine. They were so bad that I never smoked more than one or two of them. Finally, one Fourth of July after my father died, Uncle Martin and Aunt Grace came up to see us. As we sat in the backyard and talked, I looked for a cigarette. I could not find one. I went into the house to search for some. There just were none around the house. I even checked the raincoat pockets to no avail. Then I drove to Hanson's South End Store but found that they were closed. Next I drove to O'Connor's Store and they too were closed. As I drove around town from store to store, I realized what a slave to cigarettes I had become. Instead of continuing my search, I drove home. I told myself that it was time to declare "my own Independence" - from cigarettes. From that day on I never smoked again. It was a very tough thing to do. The family never spoke about my efforts, but I suspect they were rooting for me to quit. I immediately gained 30 pounds from compensating with food. Now, about 30 years later, I am very distressed when I see students of mine, especially nursing students at Iowa Central, smoking. I just wish that I could tell them how hard it was for me to quit. They would not listen any more than I would have listened when I started smoking.

One thing remains in my mind today about the Wings cigarettes. The company sponsored a radio show that gave away Piper Cub airplanes. At the end of each show listeners were told about a contest which would give away a plane. The announcer would finish up the show by saying that maybe some day soon,

someone would be flying a Piper Cub to the winner. With background noises of the aircraft flying, the announcer carried on a conversation with a pilot. The announcer would say something like "And now, Joe, take this Piper Cub to Milford Brainsworth in Yucca, Arizona. The pilot would reply, "I'm practically there, Steve." That phrase stuck in my brain and even today, when called by Marj or the kids I will sometimes answer, "I'm practically there, Steve." They must wonder if "old Dad" is losing his mind.

Chapter Six

Junior High School Days

Victory Gardens

In 1942, when we lived on West Street, Dad decided that we had to have a "Victory Garden." We had no room in our own yard for a garden. We tried to spade up, rake, and plant some small things in the area west of the kitchen, but there was little sunshine because the house and attached garages shaded it most of the day. Dad read in the newspaper that Victory Garden plots would be opened up on Lincoln Way, first come, first served. These plots were east of the Welch School football field, between Wilmouth and Franklin Streets and bordered by Lincoln Way.

Dad called City Hall right away and requested a plot. At the appointed time, he loaded up the wheelbarrow with rakes, spades, hoes, sticks, twine, and a hammer. I walked along with him as he wheeled the home-made wheelbarrow west on West Street to Wilmouth, then south to the garden spot. Several people were there clustered around a man from City Hall. Dad approached the man, gave his name, and was assigned a plot. I went with Dad to find our plot, which today I would estimate to be about a 50 feet by 150 feet rectangle. A corner peg had Dad's name written on it in pencil. Dad laid out the rectangle, put up twine to encircle the plot, and proceeded to rake the plowed plot level. I helped him. After he had raked about half of it, he gave me the rake as he put in stakes and hoed furrows into which he planted seeds. I raked the rest of the plot.

We put in potatoes, sweet corn, peas, carrots, radishes, onions, green beans, cucumbers in the rows he had laid out. The east portion was reserved for plantings of tomatoes, eggplant, and summer squash. Each night we came back to the garden plot to plant more, hoe and pull weeds, and water the tomato and eggplant. For these trips we carried a hoe and a rake the six blocks or so to the plots.

Many other people were making similar trips to tend their plots. Some that lived further away drove their cars, which were parked on Wilmouth, as Lincoln Way was the U. S. Highway 30 through town, and it carried a lot of traffic.

We did enjoy the garden produce. Sometimes I was asked by Mother to go to the garden to pick onions, lettuce, radishes, and other small produce. For these trips I carried a basket. She sent along a dull paring knife for me to use to cut the lettuce. She told me that if I cut it, it would continue to grow. If I pulled it, then there would be no more lettuce.

Dad and I both loved eggplant. We watched it grow and blossom. Dad carried along a sprinkling can full of water. When we got to the garden he added Paris Green, which was a powder that was supposed to kill the bugs that attacked the squash, eggplant, and tomatoes. We also had potato bugs which Dad had me pick off and squash between two pieces of wood. Then he would dust these plants with some powder.

We did pretty well with the gardens, but we found that sweet corn was commonly stolen just when it was at its best. We also lost a few eggplant. I do recall one night when Dad told me which eggplant I was to pick off the next day for our supper. When I went to the garden the next afternoon, they were gone. Most of the time the plot owners really spent time on maintaining a nice weed-free garden, but some gardens were left to go to weeds as the owners gave up.

War Bond Drives

During World War II we had a need for raising money to fight the war. War bonds, now called Defense Bonds, were sold in varying amounts. All that we ever got involved with sold for \$18.75 and could be redeemed after 7 years for \$25.00. Other denominations were \$50, \$100, and others even higher.

Movie stars came to Ames to promote the bond drives. The Boy Scout troupe was recruited to form an honor escort for Veronica Lake and Chester Morris. I was a member of that troop. I put on my clean Scout shirt and neckerchief and took the bus to the Collegian Theater downtown. Here Joe Gerbrach had constructed a stage in the street in front of the theater. The guests were driven from the train depot to the theater by Gerbrach in his big Cadillac convertible. The depot was close, but the guests were driven a long way around. They cruised down Main Street so the people could see them.

Veronica Lake was an actress whose hairdo covered one eye. Chester Morris was a star in B movies and many times played a gangster. I had seen him in many movies at the Varsity Theater in Campustown, usually a "double bill" theater in those days.

The people standing around the stage were able to hear the city dignitaries welcome the stars. Then the stars spoke briefly about the need for War Bonds. People were encouraged to buy them in a mood that resembled a pep rally. The stars then went to the lobby of the theater where paying movie goers could meet them.

The Scouts lined up as an honor guard on the steps to the stage and stood at the rear and sides of the platform during the rally. During a speech, I handed a piece of paper and a pencil to Veronica and Chester for their autographs. I was proud to have them. I saved these autographs in a trunk that was in the attic of the barn behind our house.

Since some people could not afford to buy a whole bond, defense stamps were sold in denominations of 10 cents and 25 cents. The dime stamps were red in color; the quarter stamps were green. We were given books in which to paste the stamps. When the quarter book was full, it was taken to the post office or any bank to be redeemed for a \$25.00 bond. The dime books only held \$5.00 worth of stamps, so three full books and another book of 37 more stamps plus a nickel were required for the bond.

While I was at Welch School we had Defense Stamp Day one day a week when we were encouraged to buy stamps. I frequently bought one dime stamp. After I moved up to the high school, the homerooms engaged in contests to see which room bought the most stamps. The weekly totals were printed in the student newspaper page of the Ames Daily Tribune. That page was The Web.

I still have a partially-filled book of these stamps.

Wartime Rationing

During the war years from 1941 to 1945 we experienced all kinds of rationing. I readily recall gas, tires, shoes, meat, sugar, and other items being rationed. To be allowed to purchase these items we needed a ration book. One book was issued per member of the family.

Gasoline was rationed very soon after the war started. Stickers were issued that were affixed to the windshield on the passenger side so it would not obstruct the vision of the driver. Categories that I recall were the "A", "B", "C", and "T" stamps. The "A" stamp was the most common. This was for the family car; the owner was allowed to purchase five gallons per week. In the beginning of the war I think the allocation was only three gallons for a time. The "B" stamp was assigned to people like pastors, pharmacists, and other local business people who had to drive on business. The "C" stamp was for the commercial traveler, such as traveling salesmen. When I worked in the drug store, the drug representatives that called on Mr. Spriggs had the "C" stamp on their cars. Spriggs had a "B" stamp because he had to make deliveries with his car.

The "T" stamp was placed on trucks. I do not know what their allotment was, but each truck carried one. I suspect that there was another category for the farmers, maybe an "F" stamp. This allowed them to fill up their gas barrels which held the tractor gas.

In the beginning days of the war everyone was very patriotic and, from my viewpoint, followed the rules closely. As the war continued it was soon obvious that there were abuses of the system. Farm kids would fill up their gas tanks from the barrels. This allowed them to attend the out-of-town ballgames. Stamps began to appear on the black market. Many gas stations had stamps available for sale if the customer did not have enough stamps for his purchase. I had heard that the Mafia in America had a regular business of printing and selling bogus gas stamps.

Since gas was so precious we had to conserve it as much as possible. My friends and I even took #10 cans from the L-Way Café, where my friend, Dres Thiel, worked, and went to the gas stations around the area and drained the hoses. This was poured into Don Payer's Model T in which we all rode.

I was at Don Payer's house the day it was announced that rationing was discontinued. We all jumped into his car; he drove to a gas station and proudly said, "Fill 'er up!" Don had been talking for a long time about all that he was going to do when the war was over. This was the first of those actions that he was able to put into place. I gave him the nickname of "Postwar Payer," because he was continually referring to what he would do when it ended.

Hitchhiking

Hitchhiking was the most common way for me to travel in the war time and after. Most of my travel in my youth was by bicycle, but as I grew older and my horizons widened, it started hitchhiking. I found that if I missed the bus for school, my quickest alternative was hitchhiking from the south side of Lincoln Way at the corner of Campus Avenue.

If I was going to Des Moines, which was a common destination for me, I would go to the corner of Duff and Lincoln Way. A Lunch Box Café was located at that corner. In front of the café, there would usually be a line of guys hitchhiking. Newcomers were to stand at the north end of the line, as the cars that stopped were further south of that point.

I would stick out my thumb along with the others. Gradually, I worked my way south and managed to get a ride. I always hoped that the driver was going to Des Moines so I wouldn't have to catch another ride partway down the road. The usual destination for the ride was the corner of 13th Street and Euclid Avenue in Des Moines. From this corner, I could cross the street and stand at the southeast corner to hitch a ride to Iowa City, where I later attended college.

One time my father and I hitchhiked to Des Moines to visit with my aunt and uncle, Grace and Martin Nass. We took a streetcar to the Euclid and 13th Street corner to hitch a ride back and waited without success. Dad decided that we should start walking. We walked to Ankeny before we managed to get a ride to Huxley. It was getting dark as we crossed at the viaduct; a gas station there served as the bus depot. Dad checked his change and discovered that we had enough money to ride the next bus, soon due to arrive, to Ames. When we got Ames, we walked the cinder path to our home.

Another time, I took my brother, David, with me for a fun day at Riverview Park in Des Moines. I was a newspaper carrier who had been taken to the park as a bonus for delivering the papers. I was 12 years old and David was only 5. We hitchhiked from Campustown to the proper corner and stood in line. We were quickly picked up and taken to Des Moines. David and I rode the rides, which cost 5 cents a ride. Then we took the streetcar to the Equitable Building where Uncle Martin worked. He bought us some lunch from a cart that was located in the building. After a brief visit it was time to go home. We rode the streetcar back to the corner of 13th and Euclid and started holding out our thumbs.

After a long wait, I began to worry. It was soon to get dark and I had no money left. David was tiring and was impatient to get home. He was wearing a white sailor suit and wore a white cap. A truck finally stopped and we ran up to it. The door swung open and a man leaned out. "Are you going to Ames?" I called out. "Yes, but you will have to ride in the back," he answered. There were three people in the front seat. I walked to the back of the open box truck and pondered. The floor was covered with coal and I

knew we would get very dirty, but we had to get home. I walked back to the front and told the man, "Okay, please drop us off at Duff and Lincoln Way."

I pushed David up and then climbed into the truck. We moved to the front of the truck so we could sit with our backs to the front end of the truck. As the driver started up I could tell that we were in trouble, as the coal dust started swirling around inside the box. Nothing to do now but wait it out.

When we arrived in Ames, we walked the cinder path to our house on West Street. Finally, we arrived at home. As I opened the door my mother came running. "Where in the world have you been?" she called out. "I was worried sick." Then she saw us and shrieked, "How did you both get so dirty? Get around to the back porch and take your clothes off. You are going into the tub right now."

I am amazed as I think about the experience today, that my mother let two kids go hitchhiking to Des Moines for the day.

The Dislocated Knee

During an Easter holiday I rode my bike downtown on the cinder path to the Collegian Theater for a Good Friday service. On the way home I took a detour along the Interurban tracks to Knapp Street (which was way out of my way.) My mother's instructions were to come "straight home." My idea of straight home parallels the path followed by Billy, a character in the comic Family Circus. Billy always wanders all over the comic strip as he comes "straight home." Anyway, I found all of my friends behind Louise Crawford School playing work up softball. I dropped my bike and joined the game in the outfield.

Slowly I worked my way to bat, knowing all of the time that I would be in deep trouble when I got home. When I got to the plate, I took a mighty whack at the ball, and I was really surprised to hit it all the way across the street into Jack Sprigg's yard. I was dumbfounded, as I had never hit a ball that far before in my life. The catcher yelled, "Run, you dummy." I ran to first, then second. I looked to the street to see the ball being relayed to the infield. I raced to third and slid into Ben Mason (Benjamin Winchester "Pump Action" Mason was the name I gave to him. His middle name coincided with a bee-bee gun that I coveted. It was a Winchester Pump Action B-B gun.)

Ben did not move, my leg twisted, and I dislocated my left knee. I screamed in pain, and the game ended as everyone rushed up to see what had happened. My pant leg was pulled up to reveal my leg below the knee twisted, so that the foot was flat on the ground while I lay on my back. Dorothy Marie ran across the street to Beatty's Store to use the phone. She was permitted to place a call to her father. Then she came back and stayed with me and Ben until Dr. Schanche got there. During the wait, a stray dog wandered over and licked my leg.

Carefully putting my leg on his black doctor bag to hold it up, Dr. Schanche loaded me in his coupe. He took me to the hospital and called my parents for permission to go to work on the leg. When my mother and dad arrived on the bus, they came to my room as I was coming out of the anesthetic. My mother asked me if I had put on clean underwear before I went to church. I know that this is a line attributed to all mothers, but mine actually said it to me before she even asked me how I was. By the way, I started out with clean underwear that day, but I couldn't guarantee its condition after all of my misery.

A Dime's Worth of Liver

One late afternoon Mother started thinking about supper. She decided to cook liver because it was a very cheap meat. If she purchased a roast or other cut of meat, she sometimes asked for some "liver for the cat." The butcher threw in some free liver. I am positive he knew we had no cat.

This particular afternoon Mother gave me a dime and told me to run down to Campustown to the grocery to get a dime's worth of liver to supplement the free stuff she got from the Community Grocery. Usually, if

she gave me money, she tied it up in a corner of a handkerchief so I would not lose it. This day, since I was older, she just handed me the dime and cautioned, "Now don't lose it."

I put it in the pocket of my shorts and headed for the store at the corner of Welch Avenue and Lincoln Way. I walked east on West Street to what we called West Gate, the western entrance to the campus of Iowa State College. Clyde Williams Football Field was there at the corner. I noticed a lot of activity on the track that surrounded the field, so I decided to investigate. The football coach was a very muscular man whose name was Mike Machalsky, or something similar. He was in charge of the track practice that day. I walked up and sat in front of the bleachers to watch the practice. Some boys ran sprints and relays. Others did the pole vault, running with long poles that they set in the ground to lift them up and over a bar. "This is exciting," I thought, as I forgot about the errand that I was on.

One field event that I sat closest to was the broad jump, which today is renamed the "long jump." Here the boy would run at top speed and then launch himself into space when he hit a jump-off point. He came back down into a pit of sand. I knew that I could not pole vault, throw a discus or a shot put, but I knew that I could do the broad jump if I had a chance. I watched until the coach announced that practice was over for the day. The boys all ran to the back side of the east bleachers for showers and the lockers.

Soon I was alone on the field. I decided to try a few runs at the broad jump and measure how well I did. I went to the end of the strip and ran as fast as I could go. When I hit the white rubber jump bar, I flew through the air. When I landed, I got a small twig and put it at my footprint to mark my landing. Then I went back for another try. As I raced down the path, I imagined all of the people in the bleachers were standing and cheering me on as I tried to beat my previous mark.

Finally, I realized that it was getting late and I hadn't gotten to the store yet. I hurried along the sidewalk, down some steps at the west end of Hughes Hall, and across Lincoln Way. Then I ran along the sidewalk to the store. The meat counter was at the rear of the store alongside the branch post office that we called Station A.

I asked the butcher for a dime's worth of liver. He selected some liver from the meat case and wrapped it in white paper. He tied the package with string and set it atop the counter and said, "That will be 10 cents, please." There was no tax in those days for anything costing less than 15 cents. I jammed my hand in my pocket. No dime. I checked the other pockets in my shorts and still no dime. I had lost the dime. I knew that Mother would give me the "dickens" and make me go back to carrying the money in the corner of a handkerchief again. "Just a minute. I lost my money but I will be right back," I told the butcher. He put the meat package back in the case as I ran for the front door.

I knew that the dime had been lost at the broad jump pit. I raced back and started at the spot of my last jump, still marked by the twig. I sat down and spread my legs. I sifted the sand with my fingers hoping to catch a glimpse of the dime. I was sure that my dime was there somewhere. I just had to find it. As that spot yielded no dime, I moved closer to the jump off bar. Again I sifted the sand, lifting my hands as high as my head so that I could easily see the sand fall back. Each time I gave up on that spot, I moved closer to the jump off spot. Finally, after at least three shifts of position, I spotted the dime as it fell to the pit with the sand. Wow! I had finally found it.

I clutched the dime tightly in my hand and ran all the way back to the store. I put the dime on the counter and told the butcher, "I found it." He lifted the liver package out of the case and handed it to me. Then I ran all the way home, a distance of at least eight blocks. I raced up the front steps and jerked the screen door open and hurried to the kitchen. When Mother heard the screen door slam, a sound she constantly complained about to me, she called out, "Did you get the liver?"

When I told her "Yes" and laid the package on the table, she asked me, "What in the world took you so long?" I told her, "Well, they were pretty busy at the store so I had to wait a long time." I must have been gone for at least two hours, but she gave me no argument, as she opened the package and started tenderizing the liver. She never knew the whole story!

My First Bike

I wanted a bicycle in the worst way, but I couldn't find a way to get one. My parents could not afford to buy me one as Betsey, my sister, was ill and in the hospital in Iowa City. Mother was usually with her. We, the other three kids, were left in the charge of Nora Handeland, a hired girl. She lived in downtown Ames, and we lived in Campustown, as we called it. Nora rode her bicycle the two miles to our house each morning and parked it behind our house in the driveway for the garages of the apartment house next door. She leaned it against the concrete retaining wall that we called a "bank," for embankment.

I begged and begged for a chance to ride her bike. She came out a few times and held it for me to get started. Then she ran behind me in the driveway as I wobbled back and forth. Gradually I was able to stay pretty well balanced, so I ventured out onto the front sidewalk with Nora running along behind. This girl's bicycle was easy for me to dismount, as there was not the long bar that the boys' bicycles had. I wondered how soon I'd get big enough to be able to ride a boy's bike.

One day, when Mother came home, I heard her tell Dad, "Seward, we have to try somehow to get Edwin a bike. I think I'll call around and see if any of the roomers in this area have bikes to sell cheap." I must explain that the term "roomers" applied to the many college students that lived in rooms in the houses in our neighborhood, which was just two blocks west of the Iowa State College campus.

On a Sunday afternoon a student came up to our house and approached Dad who was reading the paper on the front porch.

"I hear that you are looking for a cheap bicycle," he called out.

"Yes, we are. What do you have?" Dad answered as he put the paper down and stepped off the porch.

"It's a Monkey Wards bike, full-sized, and I have it parked down on the sidewalk. Do you want to look it over?"

"Sure. I'll get my boy to try it out," I heard from the living room as I hurried to the door.

I shot out of the house and bounded down the ten steps to the street level two steps at a time. I looked it over very carefully. It was painted green, had two fenders, very long handlebars, and a wire basket fastened to the front. The seat was large and padded, but it showed a great deal of wear around the edges. To me it looked perfect.

"Can I try it out?" I asked.

"Sure you can. Do you know how to ride? Here, I'll hold it while you get on," he offered. As he gave me a push, I headed down the sidewalk to the driveway and turned behind the house. I circled the back driveway and returned to the front, where I slowed down until Dad caught me and steadied the bike as I climbed off.

"Will this do?" Dad asked me with a smile on his face, as he knew the answer.

"Oh boy, will it!" I replied.

Dad asked the boy how much he wanted, and he suggested six dollars. My dad then said, "I'm sorry but we just don't have the six dollars to spend on a bicycle at this time. Will you take less?"

The boy thought for a while and finally said, "Okay, I'll let you have it for four dollars, but that is rock bottom. I need money for school."

Dad thought for a while before he said, "Let me check with my wife first." He went up the steps and entered the house. In a couple of minutes both Mom and Dad came out of the door and down the steps to look it over very carefully again.

Dad explained, "We will take the bike, but we never buy something like this on a Sunday. Can you bring it back tomorrow?"

"Sure, I'll be back about four tomorrow afternoon. Will someone be here then?" he inquired. Mom indicated that she would be there with the money.

I was excited. In one more day the bike would be mine. I ran several errands for Mom the next day, and when I came home, the worn but lovely green bicycle was leaning against the front porch of our house. Mother had the boy bring it up the front steps so that it would not get stolen. I ran into the house with the package that I brought home for Mom, and then I hurried outdoors to try out my bike.

I had to walk it around the house to the west, as the yard sloped down to the back driveway in that direction. I couldn't handle it down the front steps yet. No one was around to help me get on, so I leaned the bicycle against the concrete retaining wall behind the house. I climbed onto the wall and got on the seat of the bike. I put one foot on the pedal and pushed down hard as I shoved off from the wall with the other. I was riding.

As I got more experienced with the bike, I learned to mount it without using the wall. I put one foot on the pedal and shoved off with the other foot, as I swung my left over the seat. This bicycle opened up a new world to me. I was now able to follow the cinder path from Campustown to Downtown. It followed the Des Moines, Fort Dodge, and Southern Railroad tracks to Brookside Park, where it curved under two railroad trestles. It wound up in the park. A swinging bridge over Squaw Creek led me to the end of Sixth Street, and I was on my way to Downtown Ames.

As I grew older the bike began to suffer. I borrowed wrenches from Dad and took the bike apart to study how it worked. I never quite got everything back as it was supposed to be. My biggest mess was with the coaster brake. It had lots of thin washers with square pieces sticking out from them. They needed to be lined up a special way, and I never got them to work properly again. I had to get help in restoring the brakes.

I raised the seat, re-arranged the handlebars, turned the goose-neck around, and took off the fenders. I had pretty well ruined the bike, but I thought it was "neat." The wire basket was used in the beginning to carry packages for Mom and to haul my paper bag when I got an Ames Daily Tribune paper route. I even fastened stiff cardboard to the front fork, which snapped against the spokes as I rode. It gave a clicking noise which I pretended was a motor.

We used to have bike races down the hill on the north end of Hyland Avenue. As we reached the bottom of the hill, we turned to the west and headed up the Oakland Street hill, coasting as far as we could go. The rider who coasted the furthest up Oakland won the heat. We pedalled furiously as we went down the hill but had to stop pedalling as we turned. One time I was in the lead coming down the hill, and I was going so fast that I couldn't turn very well. I struggled with the handlebars and just barely scraped the curb, avoiding a nasty spill. I won the race, but I realized that if I went any faster I might not be able to turn soon enough.

Another race that I suggested to my friends took place on the tennis courts behind Welch School. Two clay courts were fenced in but the nets were not up. This court was located just east of the school, south of the upper playground, and was situated west of Sheldon Avenue. Across the street was a large wooded area with College Creek running through it. All of us lined up our bikes as I explained the rules. The last bike across a line, that I drew in the clay on the east end of the courts, would be the winner. But, we each had to ride someone else's bike. I thought this was fun, because we each tried to ride as slowly as we could and still keep from touching our feet to the ground. If that happened, we were disqualified. I thought that it was a great race, but the other kids tired of it quickly.

In late fall we all went over to the athletic fields that were located on the Iowa State College campus just north of the many tennis courts. Workmen always strung a long line of snow fence from the tennis courts to the north for a distance of about four city blocks. At night we lifted the fence up and off the stakes and arranged about a block of fence that leaned about 45 degrees from vertical. The posts still stuck up in the air but came through the fence. We would all line up at the south end and start riding in a single file as fast as we could go and as close to the fence as we dared. When we came to the leaning part, we tried to ride up on the fence like daredevils might do in a circus or carnival. Sometimes one of us would hit a stake and lose control, and occasionally one of us would go too far and go off the top end of the fence. None of us ever got hurt badly, but we had plenty of spills. I can imagine the disgust that the campus crew felt when they were called back to restore the fence again.

When I first took over a Des Moines Register route I still had most of that bike. The basket and fenders were gone. The pedals were nearly worn out, with only the metal rods remaining, but it was rideable. I usually slept until the last minute, so I had to hurry to the corner of Welch and Lincoln Way. The paper office was in the basement under the corner cigar store. We entered by an outside stairway on Welch Avenue. The opening was protected by a heavy pipe railing.

One morning I was late as usual. I pedalled hard and fast. As I turned from Sheldon by the fire station and headed east down Lincoln Way, I pumped as hard as I could to gain speed. There was no traffic at all on Lincoln Way at this time. Straining hard with a strong stroke, I lifted up on the handlebars to gain leverage. The left half of the handlebar snapped off. This threw me off balance and the bike headed to the north side of the street, as the broken half dangled in my left hand. I struggled to turn back south with only half the bar. In doing so, I oversteered and was heading rapidly for the south curb. Gradually I was able to slow down the wild gyrations and get the bike stopped. When I got off the bike and my knees were shaky. I walked the bike around my route that day with my paper bag looped around the one remaining handle bar and the seat. After I replaced the handlebar, I was always more cautious when I pedalled hard going down a hill.

Delta Tau Delta Fraternity House

When I was about 9 years old, I had a Cub Scoutmaster, Fred Brandner, who lived just west of the Delta Tau Delta fraternity house on Lincoln Way in Ames. His wife was aware that our family was in need of some help during those Depression years. She noticed that the cooks at the fraternity house threw out leftover food after each meal. She visited with the cook and asked her if she would be willing to save the food each day and let a family come each evening to pick it up. After the cook agreed, Mrs. Brandner called my mother and explained the situation.

My mother, used to feeding four kids on Dad's \$100.00 a month salary, was very willing to follow up on the arrangement. She went to the fraternity house and asked what she should provide and when the food could be picked up. The cooks said that they would save several number 10 cans; we could use those to carry the food home. They asked that we wash and return the cans on the next day so they could be used again.

Mother told me that I was to go each night and sit on the back steps of the fraternity house. After the boys in the house had all been fed, the cooks would put any leftover food into the cans for me. I was to put these cans in my wagon and cover the cans with a clean dish towel.

Each night I got out my wagon to carry the cans from the previous day. I put the cans into the wagon and put a clean folded towel into one of the cans. Then I arranged to arrive at the back door of the fraternity house by 6 p.m. As I sat waiting I tried to tell what was being served that night by the smells that came from the kitchen. The cook opened the door and helped me move the cans to the back door. One might contain a bit of mashed potatoes; another might be corn; and another might be some meat dish. Usually there was a can with gravy, also.

I would carry the cans, one at a time, and put them in the wagon. Then I covered the cans and headed home. Many nights I would stop when I was about a block away from the fraternity house to inspect what was in the cans to see if I would like it. That was silly, because I liked nearly everything. But it was kind of fun to learn what we might be eating later.

In the beginning, the amount of the food in the cans was small. Sometimes there would be about a cup of peas, enough potatoes for two people, maybe meat for two. Mother worked very hard to use all of the leftovers into her menu the next day. If the boys had scrambled eggs, french toast, boiled eggs, and so on for breakfast that meant that these foods had to be worked into the next day's meals. She was always glad to get the food which extended what we would be able to eat. Nothing ever went to waste. If there was gravy and no potatoes one day, we would have gravy served on broken up pieces of bread.

Dad worked as a janitor at Iowa State College in the Mechanical Engineering Building. He worked each day from 3 p.m. until midnight, having off the time from 6:00 to 7:00 for supper. By that time I would be returning from my trip to gather the leftovers. As time went on we became more and more dependent upon the food that we got from the fraternity, so Mother would sometimes wait to "see what Edwin brought home" before she prepared the food.

After a couple of months I noticed something very interesting. The amount of the food seemed to be slowly increasing in volume. There were six of us at home, and it was not unusual to have five or six pieces of meat appear in the can. Soon there were enough mashed potatoes so there was enough for all of us to have some. Many times we would have two choices of vegetables possibly saved from dinner and one from supper. Eventually it dawned on me that the cooks were being generous to ensure that all of my family would have something to eat each day.

As time went along, the cooks invited me into the kitchen to wait. The boys that served as waiters got acquainted with me and many times would sneak me some snack, like a bowl of pudding. They would say something like, "Here is an extra pudding. How about finishing it up for me?"

Sometimes my mother would tell me to hurry home, "because what you bring home tonight is what we are going to eat for supper." We seldom were disappointed. Enough food came from the fraternity house so that we could eat at least one good meal a day. During those tough times my family really depended upon it. My mother called the fraternity house many times to thank them and tell them how much the food meant to us. To my knowledge we used everything. Nothing was ever thrown out.

The boys in the house began inviting me to come back to watch some special occasion that they were having. I recall going to the house one time to watch the initiation of the freshmen. Each boy had to dress in ridiculous garb, such as underwear on the outside of his pants or his shirt on backwards. The initiates were crawling along the floor carrying marshmallows in their mouths and racing each other to a bucket. Other races involved carrying water from one bucket to another in their mouths. They would put their heads into one tub of water and fill their mouths with water, then crawl to the other end of the room to spit it into another tub. Sometimes the pledge was interrupted so that he swallowed the water. Other times the pledges were harassed causing them to leak the water out before they got to the second tub. Much laughter followed, as they tried to do tasks that were not really possible due to mischief they were subjected to on the way.

A most interesting stunt involved a raw egg and two tablespoons. The pledge was to insert one spoon above the upper hinge on an open door. He was to then put the other spoon under the hinge and transfer the egg from the upper spoon to the lower spoon without dropping it. There were three hinges on the door. I saw one pledge work very carefully to the point where he nearly had his egg transferred to the other spoon under the bottom hinge when the student in charge of the hazing slammed the door shut. I laughed with the others, but then I thought that it was unfair to let him get so close.

One Saturday morning they invited me to come to the house in the afternoon. Four pledges were given some activity to perform. When it was finished, they were bodily picked up by four of the members, each taking an arm or a leg. Off to Lake LaVerne they went. Each pledge struggled mightily but the efforts

were in vain. I ran alongside as the pledges were taken to the lake shore. When all had arrived, each team would swing their prisoner back and forth to a count of three. Then they were released to fly into the water fully clothed.

Lake LaVerne was a silt filled lake that was very muddy on the bottom. When the pledges emerged soaking wet and very muddy, they were told they were initiated. This activity attracted the attention of a lot of other people passing by! Much laughter greeted the pledges as they flew into the lake.

I don't know how long the food arrangement lasted between my mother and the boys in Delta Tau Delta, but my brother, who is seven years younger than I, told me that he also made the daily run to the house for leftovers. He has stated that there was always enough food to feed the family. When there were only five left at home, there would be five desserts. If they were eating minute steaks, there would be enough to serve all after cutting a steak in half for my little brother and sister. My guess is that this practice continued for about 7 or 8 years.

The boys at the Delta Tau Delta house never knew that they helped a family survive during the Depression of the 1930's. Their leftovers always made at least one good meal a day for my family, for which I am most grateful.

Today, as I walk the old neighborhood, I notice that the old Delta Tau Delta house at the corner of Hyland and Lincoln Way has seen better days. It looks like it was abandoned by the fraternity when they built a new brick house in the south part of the campus. As I look at it, I am reminded of the days so long ago when I made my nightly run with my wagon to pick up food for my family. Thanks to the Delta Tau Delta fraternity in Ames, Iowa for providing food for my family.

Free Food

I learned quickly to forage for food when I was a young boy. Mother had her eye out for any opportunity to get food. She learned that the college students studying dairy science at Iowa State College, jokingly called "Moo U" by some, studied how to make cottage cheese. Each day they had large quantities of the cottage cheese to dispose of. If anyone wanted they could appear in the late afternoon and get a quantity of the cheese for a small amount of money. Mother sent me there regularly with a Karo pail and 10 cents. For the dime, they would fill my bucket. I put the lid back on to keep it clean until I got back home.

It was fun for me to go early and watch the students make the cheese. They grew to recognize me and knew what I wanted whenever I showed up with my pail. I recognized some of the students. This put me in good stead at other times when I hung around the Dairy Industry building to watch other operations. For a time, the students made ice cream bars. These were sold commercially, each wrapped in a paper bag. I watched the process for a long time. Then I asked them if I could have one if it got broken in the process. One or two did get caught in the line, and they were given to me. On other occasions I discovered that there were no broken bars on the tables before I got there, but, sure enough, one would be broken before I left.

The campus was my playground. I wandered around looking at all kinds of things. Someone told me that the Home Economics girls had garbage cans full of scrambled eggs as they practiced different ways of cooking them. I made my way over there and saw the cooking in progress. When I saw a girl scrape a skillet of scrambled eggs into the garbage, I asked her if she would give them to me, if I got a container to carry them home. She pondered for a while and told me to come back another day and she would see. I appeared in a couple of days with my Karo pail, but I did not see the girl again. A day or two later, I did manage to talk to another student who scraped her eggs into my pail. This only happened to me the one time. Perhaps the teacher felt that they shouldn't do it. I took the pail home to Mother, who heated them up and served them for supper.

One time of the year that I liked best was during Veishea, a student run spring celebration which today has become marred by alcohol consumption. The girls in the Home Ec (that is what the "h" and "e" stand for in the name Veishea) building have always made small cherry pies for sale. These pies were made a day

before the event. I hung around and let it be known that I would gladly accept any pies that got broken, or had a poor appearance. Usually one would be found to be defective. A paper plate and fork would be given to me to "help them get rid of it." I went there many times.

I found a strange thing happening in the Electrical Engineering building at one Veishea. They were cooking hot dogs on a block of ice. This really got my attention. They had the hot dogs connected to some wires, and they actually cooked them on the big block of ice. I think this might have been an early day experiment that might have led to microwave cooking. Naturally the students gave out the hot dogs, served on a bun, to any takers. I "took" several times. In this same building another time I saw pictures of people on a round screen. The people were moving around in an adjacent room. This was an early demonstration of television.

Mother learned that the Horticulture Farm was growing a new strawberry to be called the Cyclone strawberry. The Cyclone was the name of our sports teams. The college wanted to quantify the production of the strawberry plants, so they offered to let people come and "pick on shares." I went to the berry patch with a basket that Mother had. I checked in with the person in charge. He told me to go down a certain row and pick as many berries as I wanted. When I was finished I was to report to him. He was adjacent to a table that had several containers and a scale. The rule, he stated, was to have the berries weighed. Then half would be given to me. What a deal! I loved strawberries. I squatted down in my row and picked. I dusted off several and ate them as I went. In some respects, I picked one for Iowa State, one for Mother, and one for myself.

Then Mother learned that Ben Mason's parents had a cherry tree and they did not want the cherries. The birds were flocking to the trees, and they soon would be destroyed. Mother sent me with a basket and a Karo pail. Dad had fashioned a metal hook to the handle of the pail so I could hang it on a branch of the tree as I picked. Ben's father had offered to loan a step ladder for me to get up into the tree. I picked as many cherries as I could reach. As the Karo pail got full, I would climb down and dump the cherries into the basket. When I had all that I could reach, I carried the basket home. Mother then had me pit the cherries, and she canned what we did not eat right away.

Another time, a friend, Meryl White, who lived in an apartment in the Chemistry Building at Iowa State College called to tell her that the mulberries were ripe and were going to waste. Again, I went to answer the call. This time, I carried three Karo pails as the mulberries were soft and mushy. The mulberry bushes were located at the west end of the first floor. The Whites were custodians of the building. It may seem odd today to imagine a custodian living in an apartment in a college building, but my grandmother had an apartment in the basement of Mary B. Welch Hall, a girls' dormitory now called simply Welch Hall. My great-aunt, Olga Patten, lived with her husband in the basement of an adjoining dormitory. I did not eat any of the mulberries as I picked them. I did not care much for them. They were rather tasteless as far as I was concerned.

Mrs. Marsh, a widow lady, lived across the street from my house on West Street. Her house was west of the West Street Grocery. She was an old lady who had a garden. She called Mother and offered her all of the rhubarb and asparagus that she wanted. Mother sent me over there with a paring knife and a pan. I cut the asparagus and took it home. I got a bigger pan and returned for the rhubarb. I loved rhubarb so I sometimes took a salt shaker with me. I pulled the rhubarb stalk, wiped the dirt off with my fingers, licked part of the stalk to make it wet, and then sprinkled salt on it. It was good. I filled the big pan with pulled rhubarb which I took to our back door so I could cut the leaves off.

Probably the job that I hated the most was going to my great-aunt Olga's farm for gooseberries. After she and Raleigh, her husband, moved from the dorm to his farm just west of town, she learned that there were a lot of gooseberries there. Mother prepared me for the gooseberry picking. She took some old cotton stockings and cut the ends off the feet. She had me put on an old long-sleeved shirt to keep my arms from being scratched. She then showed me how to pull the stockings over my hands so that just my fingers stuck out. Again, out came the Karo pails. I put them in my bicycle basket and headed for the farm. It was a hot, sticky morning. It had rained shortly before and the ground was muddy. I put the stockings on my arms and tried to get the berries without getting scratched too much. It was slow going. I hated

gooseberries and told myself that I would not eat the pie Mother was going to bake. It took me forever to get a pail and a half and then I quit. I rode back home with the stockings, one stuffed in each pocket. I told Mother that next time Gloria and David could go in my place. I seem to recall that Mother and Dad went there together to pick some more. I never went back there again.

So much for the free food. We continued with the picking of what fruit was offered for several years. The cherries came only one year; the strawberries for several years. Most of what I was sent to pick or pull was something that I liked. I even ate the mulberries when Mother cooked them in with the rhubarb. Good eating, and it was all free. During these Depression times, it was greatly appreciated by my family.

Eschbach Music Store

During the years that I attended school in Ames, I frequently went to a music store that was located in the 500 block of Main Street. When I was in 7th grade, I decided to try to play a musical instrument. The instrument that I chose was the clarinet. Of course, I needed one, so my mother went with me to Eschbach's to rent or buy one. We found an inexpensive clarinet that I felt I could play. Mother arranged for payments. I eagerly took it home where I cleaned it, held it, and practiced blowing it. Of course, the ability to play required some talent and some time to practice.

My lessons were given in a room just east of the stage in the Welch School gym. It was usually cold in there. Each week I met with my teacher for a half-hour lesson, that must have been pure agony for him. I had no talent. I was not interested in the practice time, as there was always something else that I preferred to do. Needless to say, the teacher finally gave up on me. He called my mother and suggested I should consider quitting unless I was willing to practice.

The clarinet was put away until my sister, Gloria, was old enough to learn to play it. She did well so it was not a total loss for my parents.

After my aborted attempt to play an instrument, I continued to go to the music store because they sold records. I had little money to spend, but I did enjoy going in with my friends to listen. Eschbach's had three sound rooms located on the west wall of the store. Each held a record player. At that time we had only 78 rpm records. A prospective customer would look through the records, pick out some that interested him, and then go to one of the rooms to listen to them. I did purchase a few records during those days. Most of the records I bought had a war theme, such as "Praise the Lord And Pass The Ammunition," "Coming In On A Wing And A Prayer," "Johnny Zero," "Leave The Dishes In The Sink," "Sioux City Sioux," and "How Much For The Doggie In The Window." "Chattanooga Shoe Shine Boy," and, of course, "White Christmas" were very popular. I became enamored by Teresa Brewer, who sang with such a tiny voice.

I wonder now how the store owners felt about all of the kids coming in after school to listen to their supply of records and then seldom buying anything.

Today, when we go into a music store to buy a tape or CD, we are never offered the chance to listen to it before we buy it. They are usually shrink wrapped and contained in an anti-theft device that is removed only at the check-out counter.

Lake LaVerne

When I was growing up in Ames, a college town, I explored the campus a lot. The central attraction much of the time centered around the Memorial Union and Lake LaVerne. This small lake was created by construction of a limestone rock dam on College Creek. Each spring two swans were placed on the lake, and most of the time several small goslings would be hatched. They would all parade in a graceful line of motion.

A lot of hungry goldfish, chubs, and other tiny minnows could be seen from the shore of the lake. When I was just a small child I took a safety pin, some bread, string, and a stick and fashioned my own fishing pole. I tied the string to the head of the pin, which I spread open in about a 60-degree angle. The stick was used as a pole. If the bread was old and stale, a piece would stick to the pin until it got too saturated with water. You will probably find it hard to believe, but I actually caught several fish this way. I could see them rise to the bait, and if I tugged at the right time, the fish might still be on the bread. Other times I snagged the fish with the sharp pin head. I found that I was more successful with a small pin. I always threw the fish back, but one time when I actually hooked the fish, it just floated on top of the water. This made me feel bad, but not enough to make me stop fishing.

Later, when I made some money selling coat hangers, I bought some real fishhooks at the dime store in Campustown. Much of the time I stuck myself in the fingers as I tried to bait the hooks. I also did more damage to the fish when they were caught on the hook.

This lake was formed by a limestone dam constructed at the east end. College Creek flowed in from the west, after crossing Lincoln Way by means of a tunnel under all of the stores in the one business block. It was a pretty lake, bounded on three sides by a sidewalk. The fourth side was densely wooded with small pine trees. Each spring and fall when the blackbirds were migrating, huge hordes of them roosted at night in these trees. John Bradish, a friend of mine, and I got flashlights and entered the woods when the birds were all settled down. As we flashed our bright lights and yelled loudly, the birds lifted off the trees in large swarms. The noise they made was awful. I was fascinated to notice that the tree limbs lifted back up as the heavy load of the birds flew off. As we passed along the paths, shining our lights and making a racket, I noticed that the birds just settled down behind us again. You can imagine the mess the birds made on us as we ran down the paths.

The lake became heavily silted, as the water flow was very slow. The lake was not very deep, probably not more than six to eight feet in the center. The bottom was thick mud, which stuck to one's feet as he waded in to retrieve a hook snagged on a rock or a toy sailboat that got away. I never saw anyone swimming in the lake. We jokingly called it Lake LaMud.

Each spring the college held a student-organized festival called Vieshea, an acronym made up of the first letters of the different divisions of the college: Veterinary Medicine, Industrial Education, Science, Home Economics, and Agriculture. Each fraternity had various contests, one of which was a canoe battle on the lake. This was not a race for distance but a race for time afloat. Each canoe had a three-man crew. A paddler was in each end of the canoe, kneeling down the proper way to paddle. The third man stood in the center of the canoe holding a long wooden pole that was heavily padded on the end with something that looked much like a big boxing glove. Each team got into their canoe alongside a large wooden platform mounted on big oil drums. They moved away from the dock and into battle. Each jousting tried to throw the other crews off balance. If the man standing fell out or the canoe overturned, that team was eliminated.

By the end of the race a winner was declared, but all participants were thrown into the lake, even the winners. They waded out of the lake as a muddy mess. In later years this activity was banned by the college.

Delta Tau Delta, a fraternity located at Lincoln Way and Hyland Avenue, was near my home, and I became well acquainted with the boys living there. Each fall they had an initiation where they harassed the freshmen pledges by making them do ridiculous things. One requirement that I watched closely consisted of having each pledge take two large tablespoons, one in each hand, and walk an egg down the hinged side of an open door without breaking the egg. They started out with their spoon bowl side up and above the top hinge. An active member would place an egg in the spoon. They were then to lower the egg past three hinges and onto the floor without breaking it. If the egg was broken, the actives would grab the pledge and, with much struggling, carry him the six or seven blocks to Lake LaVerne. On the bank they started swinging him back and forth by his arms and legs. On the count of three, they let him fly into the lake. The actives did not play fair, as one pledge nearly made it to the bottom. The active just pushed the door shut on him, breaking his egg. He, too, took the plunge into the muddy bottom of the lake.

In the summer we sat on the lawn of the hillside opposite the north side of the lake as we listened to band concerts. Sometimes the band would be positioned in the street that went around the lake. One time we listened as the band played from a floating dock anchored on the shore of the lake. These were pleasant evenings for us. We all walked the several blocks from our home on West Street and carried a blanket to sit on. These concerts were discontinued as I grew older. We then had to ride the bus to the bandshell downtown for our concerts.

This lake provided much joy to me as a boy. When I look at it now, it seems so much smaller. The dam on the east end has been replaced now so one can no longer watch the water trickle down the limestone ledges. I wonder if the children growing up in Ames today still get as much happiness out of playing on and around this lake as I did so many years ago.

Miscellaneous School Day Memories

One more recollection came to me while I was reading the Web pages in the Ames Public Library. They talked about the students working in the cafeteria. I recall one time getting my food and going to a table to eat to discover that I'd forgotten a fork. When I came back with my silverware, I discovered that someone, probably a friend, had mixed my mashed potatoes, gravy and chocolate pie into one big gooey mess.

When I contacted Max Wilhelm to confirm something recently I asked him if he remembered the Great Treasure Hunt put on by Bob Loomis and him. Many of the Welch kids frequently played together at the Louise Crawford School grounds, which was across the street from Beatty's Store. Beatty had a small, neighborhood grocery store that also sold ice cream and loose meat sandwiches. Beatty was always grumpy about having kids cut across his lot to the west of the store or bothering him in his store. I used to tease him whenever I saw him swatting flies, I said he was just going to gather them up and put them into his loose meat pan. Some might think this stunt pulled by Bob and Max was not very nice, but it was very funny.

A Poem From the Past

The following poem, entitled "The Gang" was written by me in 1945 the fellows I used to run around with. You will note that I mention in the poem that "he gets gypped on all deals." This reminds me of a time in 1946 when we all decided to go to the State Fair in Des Moines to make our fortune. We each had about \$20.00. We went to the Midway and met a huckster who showed us how we could make a lot of money by picking out a duck with a number on the bottom in the water. During the free practice we would have made a fortune, but when we put down real money, we all lost most of the money. The huckster kept assuring me, "Just try one more time and I know you will win next time." I believed him "with all my heart and money" and kept playing till I lost all of the \$20.00. Fortunately, the rest of them still had enough money to buy gas to get back to Ames.

"The Gang" by Ed Nass

Our gang is quite average,
Some rich and some poor;
But to find what we're like,
Just read a bit more.

There's Swanson the brain,
Who will get ahead;
Cause he knows on which side,
to butter his bread.
He'll have stacks of dough,
but gals, don't get harried;

He swears up and down,

That he'll never get married.

Dres Thiel's future,
Isn't hard to rate;
But a little more gumption,
will open wider the gate.
He's quiet and reserved,
Around strangers, it's true;
But he's one swell guy,
And good looking, too.

Dick Berhow's all right,
If the going's well;
But he's inclined to slow down,
When he hits a dry spell.
He'll fare all right,
In this cruel world though;
Cause his personality melts
A mountain of snow.

Don Payer's the dreamer
with legs very long;
And with a future in business,
He won't go far wrong.
He's a golf fiend, it's true,
This good-looking gent;
But he still can't beat Ed,
In an argument.

John B. is the kid,
A junior Paul Bunyan;
Who'll chop down trees,
For his burger and onions.
His ping-ping drives you bats,
His ping-pong is fair;
And his shirt tail is out,
A-flagging the air.

Ed Nass is the screwball,
the drunkard, the loaf;
He looks and he acts,
Like a thick headed oaf.
He gets gypped on all "deals,"
And his life seems a flop;
He'll make a few dimes,
By pushing a mop.

Now you've seen how we vary,
From a brain to a sop;
And now that I'm done,
This poem I will stop.

Yo-Yo's

A store in Dogtown sold a whole bunch of yo-yo's to us. An Oriental Iowa State student was hired to carve decorative scenes on the more expensive models. He also put on demonstrations showing us how to "walk

the dog," do the "waterfall," and twirl the yo-yo over our heads. After war broke out, I grew very suspicious of this student. I imagined that he was one of the "dirty Japs" that the posters in the elevators in Des Moines cautioned us about.

Collecting Bottles for Two Cents Each

Ben Mason, a high school friend, worked for the Navy V-12 program which was quartered in Hughes Hall. Ben had a job in their equivalent of a PX. One day, as I was walking down Lincoln Way, I was called across the street by a bunch of Navy guys who were on break. They could not cross the highway, but they wanted cokes from the small restaurant on the south side of Lincoln Way near the Collegiate Methodist Church. I ran back and forth carrying cold cokes to the guys, earning a tip of a nickel for each coke. A bonus for me was collecting the bottles after they had to go back inside for classes. These I redeemed for 2 cents apiece.

The Nosey News

I have a copy of the Nosey News, a newspaper produced by the Eighth Grade Class at Welch School in 1942. To the best of my recollection, the class produced only about six issues. We charged three cents for the subscription. When the paper folded we never paid back any of the money. The first newspaper was done at school in the classroom. The duplication process was the only way that the teacher had to make copies in the classroom in those days before the Xerox process, that we all take for granted today.

The girls on the staff generally typed the copy on a slick white paper that had a backing sheet covered with a purple substance. When they typed the page, the imprint was made on the back side of the white sheet. If an error was made, it was necessary to turn the page up in the typewriter, take a razor blade and scrape the purple image off the back side. Then the paper had to be repositioned back to the same place for striking the correct letter.

After the page was typed and proofed, we took it to a flat aluminum pan which contained Knox Gelatin that had hardened to the Jello stage. The white page was placed purple side down on top of the gelatin, then a roller was used to transfer the purple image into the surface of the gelatin. Carefully, the white page was removed and set aside. Then a small amount of an alcohol mixture was poured over the top of the gelatin and quickly poured off.

Then, one sheet at a time, a clean sheet of paper was placed on top of the gelatin, rolled with the roller, and then removed from the pan and set aside to dry. One by one, the sheets were copied in this manner. If the image got too weak, then the gelatin had to be heated until the purple stuff had sunk down into the gelatin. Then the gelatin was allowed to harden and the process was repeated.

After the first issue, the rest of the issues were typed, some by the girls on a typewriter at school, some on their home typewriters. A small group of us came to our house on West Street, where my mother had prepared the gelatin and we did the copy process ourselves. It worked better with two different pans as we could switch them between pages. I do recall Marnie Wallace, Gerald Murphy, Jack Marrs, Dorothy Schanche and Barbara Weber on at least one occasion.

We were never able to get much more than 12 pages on a run. Before my 50th class reunion, copies of three of the editions were loaned to me by Dorothy Schanche. She had saved them all of these years. That in itself is amazing. One of the four pages of one edition was printed on manilla paper that is very rough. The image could not be read to reproduce it. I had to reproduce it one word at a time using a magnifying glass and a strong light.

Marnie Wallace related to me at the reunion that she typed the very last edition of the paper. We were all too tired of the process of duplication, so she just thumbtacked the last edition to the door of one of our rooms. Mr. Harlan, the principal, read the issue and tore it from the wall. He scolded Marnie for saying bad things about the long hair of some of the boys on our basketball team. That ended the newspaper.

My job on the staff was collecting the jokes and the want ads. As I read the papers Dorothy had preserved, I laughed again at my corny jokes. One of the want ads particularly had meaning to me. I offered for sale my BB gun, which I stated was in excellent condition. Actually my dad had bent it all out of shape in the vise in the basement after I had shot my brother, David, in the nose. The shot required surgery, and I was told the BB entered his nose only 1/2 inch from his eye. I asked for \$1.00 for the gun in the ad, but in actuality the gun was in the scrap pile.

When I was a kid at Welch School my life seemed to be so easy. We were all so young. I assumed that we would all stay that way. Now we learn what our parents have been through, as illness creeps around the corner to slow us down. It's been a wonderful life for me. I wouldn't have changed a bit, except to work on my shyness.

Toot Your Own Horn

Mr. Jay Busby was our junior high school coach at Welch School during the early 1940's. He was the most unlikely person that I could ever admire. Physically he was tough. He talked with a gruff voice. He coached football, and it was a tough sport. I was a scrawny kid, not very well coordinated, and afraid of getting hurt.

I never considered going out for football, as most of my classmates were much better at sports than I - even some of the girls. Dorothy Schanche and Pauline Gibbs were much better hitters during our noon-hour workup softball games. The only way that I could ever get on base was to hunch over the plate and hope for a walk. One time Pauline hit behind me and passed me on the bases. I was declared OUT.

Mr. Busby was also my Civics teacher in seventh grade. I was scared to death of him and never spoke to him voluntarily. My seat was in the back of the room, as far away from his desk as I could get. I listened to his lectures, tried to do well on the tests, but every Friday I panicked completely. This was the day we did the "Weekly Reader" reports. The Weekly Reader was a small student paper of current events. Mr. Busby would call on students at random for a report, one after another, until the whole paper had been covered. He entered a grade for the students as they completed their reports. Then he filled out the rest of the day with his report on the other current events that he felt we should know.

Each Thursday, after the new issue was passed out, I quickly scanned the paper for a short article. I was happiest if I found one that was also funny. Then on Friday I would sit in the back and slide way down in my seat to keep from being seen by Mr. Busby. As each person was called on, I was relieved that he had not chosen me, but I became panicky, as eventually my article was chosen by someone. Those times he called on me I was forced to say, "I don't have one ready." Sometimes if mine was given early in the class, I would hurriedly read the paper to find another. That, too, would generally be given by another classmate before I was called on. My grade in Civics was really bad. I was doomed to fail Civics and then, probably next, the seventh grade. I hated Friday. I grew to hate going to school, knowing what faced me in Civics.

One Friday, at the end of class, I hurried for the door with a red face of embarrassment, as once again I was forced to say, "I don't have a report." Just as I reached the door I heard Mr. Busby call out, "Edwin. Please stay after class for a minute. I want to talk to you." I stopped and slowly walked toward his desk to the jeers of my classmates, "Boy, are you in trouble."

After all of the class had left, he walked over to shut the door, telling me to sit down. "You are failing in my class. Do you have any idea why?" he asked.

"No," I replied.

"I notice each Friday you slide down and try to hide from me. Why?"

"Well, I'm afraid you will call on me," I said.

"Then why don't you ever have your report like I told the class to prepare?" he asked.

Meekly I said, "Well, I do get one ready each week, but someone else always gives it before you ask me."

"Do you really have a report ready each week?" he inquired.

"Yes," I timidly answered.

Mr. Busby thought about it for a minute. Then he told me of his plan. "You get an article ready each week. I will ask the class if anyone wants to volunteer to give his report first. You shoot your hand up if you are ready. I promise that I won't call on you if your hand is down. You must promise me that you will really try. O.K.?"

"All right. I'll try," I heard myself say. As I left the room I was met by a few boys who asked, "Is he going to call your Mom?" "Did he tell you that you flunked?" "What did he do to you?" "Did he hit you?" I said, "Oh, nothing," as I went down the hall.

The next Thursday came and I took my Weekly Reader home. I read the whole thing, selected a short article, and re-read it several times. You need to realize that this paper was a single sheet of paper, folded once to form only four pages. The back page was usually jokes, puzzles, and sports.

On Friday I took the paper with me into the room and spread it out on top of my desk. "How do I know that he won't forget our deal and call on someone else? Then they will choose my article and give it. Finally he will remember me and call on me. I'm dead again," my thoughts bounced around in my head.

At 9 o'clock Mr. Busby came into the room and shut the door. "We will have our Weekly Reader reports now," he announced, after he had checked and recorded attendance. "Is there anyone who wants to go first today?" he asked, looking at everyone but me.

Several hands went into the air, but not mine. He just looked around the room slowly, saying nothing. Some of the most eager girls put up their second hand to help support the hand that was waving. Still he said nothing. Some student said, "Let me," but he still said nothing.

Then with my heart in my throat, I slowly raised my hand. I was astonished to hear him announce, "O.K., Edwin. Why don't you go first today." My knees shook as I stood beside the desk. I gave my report, looking down at the paper spread on the desk for reassurance. As I finished and sat down, I heard him say, "Thank you, Edwin. Now who wants to be next?" I noticed that he made a mark in the grade book. This same scene was repeated over the next few weeks. Even if my report was not very complete, he thanked me for giving my report. I soon discovered that I was completely relaxed for the rest of the class after giving my report.

During the next four or five weeks, as class was ending, I stopped at the front row, put my books down, and carefully tied and re-tied my shoestring until all of the class was out of the room. Then I quickly went up to his desk and nervously said, "Thanks, Mr. Busby." With my head looking down, I turned to pick up my books. I heard Mr. Busby say, "Edwin. Stop. Turn around and look at me. You are welcome. I'm glad that you finally see how well you can do if you say what you have to say first. You just need to learn to 'toot your own horn' so that others can hear what you have to say."

I left quickly without another word. Mr. Busby continued to call on me when my hand was raised regardless of the class that I was taking from him during my three years at Welch. He never called on me if my hand was down. I learned a most important lesson from that man. Even to this day I can say, "Thanks, Mr. Busby."

Camp Mitigwa

On the hills above the river,
In among the trees.
Flies the flag of Camp Mitigwa
Waving in the breeze.

So goes the song that we sang when we went to the Boy Scout camp near Madrid. I joined the Boy Scouts when I was twelve years old, as a tenderfoot. Mother signed the papers allowing me to go. A physical examination was required by a doctor. Carrying my papers, I took the bus downtown and went upstairs over the Union Story Trust and Savings Bank at the corner of Douglas and Main. Dr. Rosebrook had his office above the bank. There were long stairs to climb.

I waited in the waiting room until Miss Lindblood, his nurse, called me into a small room. When Dr. Rosebrook came in, he asked me where I was going to camp. He asked me if I had ever gone before. I told him that I loved camping as a Cub Scout, but that this was my first time at a regular Boy Scout camp. After he looked me over, he signed my papers. Then he took out his wallet, removed a dollar bill, and gave it to me. I asked him what the dollar was for. He told me that he knew that there would be a canteen at camp. He explained that it would be a small store that would be open each evening where the campers could buy candy, ice cream, and other treats. He wanted me to have the dollar so that I could buy treats. I thanked him and stuffed the dollar into my pants pocket.

The camping fee was beyond our ability to pay, but Mr. Brandner arranged with some service club to pay my fee. I was now all set for camp. Mother sewed colored thread into my underwear, shirts, pants and socks. She explained that this was a way for me to tell which clothes were mine. Then all of my clothes were stuffed into a bag with a drawstring to hold it closed.

We met at the Scout Hall in the basement of the Collegiate Methodist Church. Someone with a truck loaded up all of the troop's gear. We crammed ourselves into cars and trucks for the ride to camp. I was assigned to a cabin that held about 8 boys. We were told to check out the mattress covers and put them over the thin mattresses that were rolled up on each bunk. Then we were given a blanket and two sheets. My sheet had many patches on it, but it was clean. Our cabin leader showed us how to make up our bunks and stow our gear. Now we were ready to explore the camp.

The mess hall stood at the south end; the cabins were along the east and west sides of the camp. A bathroom with about three stalls was also on the west side near the cabins. The sinks were outdoors under the trees. The water pipes were exposed. We washed ourselves and brushed our teeth outside; this seemed odd to me. At the north end there was a swimming pool and a small building that served as the canteen. A high fence enclosed the pool. Showers were located in the pool building on the north side of the pool.

There were many trails leading from the camp in all directions. One went down to the river, the Des Moines River. Others led to areas where we would have activities of all kinds. The central area had a shelter. Here we had our meetings, worked on our crafts, and held our nightly story sessions.

I was assigned to KP duty on the second day. I reported early before each meal and helped put the things on the table. I do recall vividly putting loaves of white bread, bowls of butter, and jars of peanut butter on each table. This was the way we were filled up after each meal. We boys lined up by cabins and filed past the kitchen counter to pick up our metal trays of food. Then we sat at an assigned table.

Pitchers of milk or lemonade were on the tables. I thought that the food was very good. For once, I could get all that I wanted to eat. I especially loved the bread and peanut butter that I stuffed myself on after the meal. The butter was plastered on the bread; then the peanut butter was thickly smeared on. What a treat! It was better than dessert. Sometimes we had canned peaches, which I loved to eat with the peanut butter sandwiches.

I loved the crafts, loved the swimming pool, and loved the Indian lore that an older man told us each day. Scout camp opened up a whole new fun world for me. Everything in the camp was fun. We braided string on spools, made lariats and lanyards out of a flat string-like material. We took nature hikes on the trails, had a church service in the woods, and learned to canoe. First we were taught to canoe in the swimming pool. After we passed the tests, we could go to the river. I never passed the tests.

We held many contests like races, climbing ropes, swinging on bag swings and so forth in the central area. These contests pitted one cabin with another. Each evening we gathered in the central area and sat around a big fire singing songs and listening to stories. Here I learned the songs like "In My Merry Oldsmobile," "Daisy, Daisy Tell Me Your Answer True," "She'll Be Coming Around The Mountain When She Comes," "The Old Grey Mare," and "My Darling Clementine."

One night during the camp we would have a rough and tumble game of "Capture the Flag." We broke into two teams. One team planted a piece of cloth on a pole and worked to defend it. The other team went into the woods and planned their attack. Feints and diversions were held to allow a swift runner from our side to dash to the pole and steal the flag. After a time the defenders switched sides and became the attackers. This game was a rough game as there was much shoving, tackling, and pushing. Running around the campground in the dark was also hard on me. I seemed to have night-blindness. It was hard for me to see as I ran. One time I recall running right into a small tree full blast.

We usually went to camp on a Saturday. Those with parents who had cars would drive up on the following Friday night for a family night. My dad worked at nights, and we did not have a car anymore, so I never had any family visit me.

It was a sad time for me on Saturday morning, as we gathered our gear and moved to the swimming pool to wait for our rides back to Ames. But it was a great feeling to think back on all of the fun that I had while I was there. During the week as we completed each task, project, or craft, we stenciled some symbol on our webbing Scout belts. As I waited for the truck to take us home, I looked over my belt with pride as I recalled each thing that I did while in camp.

I never did advance through the Scouts past the Second Class rank. I could not swim and did not pass the cooking merit badge. Otherwise I might have made First Class. I did manage to go to camp for four years, and I completely enjoyed every trip. Thanks must be given by me to the unknown people that paid my fees each year so that I could go. Dr. Rosebrook gave me my physical free each time and also gave me a dollar for the canteen every year.

Photography

In other stories I have mentioned my first camera, an 828 camera. I continued to have an interest in photography, but I was not successful in my early darkroom experiences. Still, taking pictures was fun for me. I saved my money and bought myself a box camera. It used 127 film. The pictures were larger than those on the 828 film, but smaller than the prints that we got from my parents' 120 box camera. This camera was the first one I bought that had a flash attachment. I took very few of the flash pictures, because I had to have batteries, and the flashbulbs were big and expensive.

Recently on the Internet, I found a history of film page that described the various roll films that I used. The 116 and 120 were used first but the rollers were made of wood with metal ends. This made the film roll rather big. To allow for thinner cameras, the 616 and the 620 were created on metal rollers. The negative sizes were the same as for the 116 and 120. I also learned that the 828 film in my first camera had a negative that measured 28 X 40 millimeters. Since this roll had 8 exposures, the size was labeled 828. This film was first made in 1935. Its production ended in 1985.

Other cameras were given to me by the people living in the apartment house next door. They apparently had seen me using my little 828 camera and donated their old cameras to me. One was a 620 size; another was a 616. These cameras were thin. A door opened in the front and the lens part was pulled out on a

track. A bellows opened up. The camera was sighted by looking through a little glass that could be turned sideways for a horizontal shot. Both of these cameras required roll film. Both had small red windows on the back that allowed one to align the film for each shot. These cameras had a small metal circle that was rotated to see the red circle. When not in use, the metal circle covered the window for protection.

Much later, when I was in the Army in Japan, I got my first 35 millimeter camera. Its name slips my mind now, but it took two pictures on one frame of the 35 millimeter negative. It was called a split frame. The negatives were very small and required special processing. This was my first camera that used cartridge film.

Later I got a Kodak 35 camera which used 35 millimeter film. Another good camera that I purchased and used for the longest time of all was the Argus C-3. I still have it. It required an exposure meter as it was not automatic. When I was in the Army in Germany, I also purchased a simple rangefinder that gave me an approximation of the distance.

When I moved to Webster City, I purchased a double lens reflex camera; I think it was called a Rolex. It took pictures which were very good for enlargements, since the negatives were the same size as the large 120 film. It took roll film, too. These negatives were ideal for printing good prints. It was this camera that I used when I took pictures of my Cub Scouts and, later, my Sunday School class.

Probably the most interesting camera I ever had was a long camera with a lens that rotated on a pivot. The camera was loaded with 120 film, and I could get only two very long negatives to a roll of film. These negatives were used to make the wide-view shots similar to those taken at the Kendall Young Library as we started construction of the new addition. I have many pictures like this in black and white of school classes in front of their building. Unfortunately, I was curious to see how the shutter mechanism worked, so I took the camera apart one day when I was in ninth grade. It never went back together correctly. Eventually I threw it away.

I also have a 3-A Brownie Folding Camera by Kodak that is dated 1910. It holds 120 film. I don't recall taking pictures with it. It was one that was given to me by the neighbors when I was about 12 years old. My wife, Marj, has an old camera that her father used. It was a folding camera made by Kodak that used 620 film. In fact, when I opened the back recently to see what film size it took, there was still a roll of film in the camera. It has been in the camera for at least 40 or 50 years.

Now, my son-in-law has a digital camera. I have not yet experimented with it as it is quite expensive. Soon, I imagine that all pictures will be taken that way. Instead of developing pictures, you would get a sheet of proofs and select the prints you want to process. These images would be loaded into the computer and printed on a color ink jet printer.

What a change has taken place since my first attempt at using a camera to record an image!

Mrs. Marsh and the West Street Grocery

A friend, Phyllis Burroughs Heffron, sent a clipping to me of an article that Mrs. Peyton had written for the newspaper. It told of the days of motorcycles and marriage. It brought back many memories to me of my days of living across the street from their grocery store, the West Street Grocery. I lived in the house on the hill at 2907 West Street. Seward and Dorothy Nass were my parents and I had two sisters, Betsey (who died in 1938) and Gloria (now living in St. Louis) and a baby brother David (now living in a motor home and touring the United States.)

I well recall moving into the house during the 1930's. My father had a man help him move the furniture. I rode along, and my job was to stay in the house with the first load of furniture while my father returned to 13th Street for the next load. I sat at the front window and looked out on my strange world and wondered about it. I was in third grade when we moved. Across the street was the West Street Grocery. It had a garage door on the west side of the store, and there were two motorcycles, with sidecars attached, parked

inside. One was backed in and the other was driven in so they fit together closely inside the garage. The lot next door was vacant but held two large signboards held aloft by large poles.

The house next door to the store was occupied by an old lady, Mrs. Marsh. She became a friend of my mother. They developed a signal which my mother checked out each morning. If Mrs. Marsh was okay, she would lower a certain front window shade to half way. It was pulled down completely each night and raised clear up at noon. This gave my mother three times a day to tell at a glance if Mrs. Marsh needed help.

My brother and sisters did not have much space to play around our house. Much play was centered on a vacant lot across from the Polhemus family on Woodland, about two blocks west of our house. Here I played softball with Dorothy Schanche, Pauline Gibbs, Jimmy Horn, and so many others. We also played croquet there.

Dad Picked Up the Bread

David and I were nearly always famished by supper time. One night I recall Dad walking up the front steps for supper and being met at the door by Mom. She told him, "Seward, go across to Payton's for a loaf of bread." This he did. We all gathered at the table and Mother served our meal. We had a rule at our house that if the food was gone and we were still hungry we could eat peanut butter sandwiches to fill up. David and I did this regularly. After supper, Dad sat down to read the paper and smoke a hand-rolled cigarette before returning to work as a janitor at the Mechanical Engineering building. As Dad put on his coat to leave, Mother called out to him, "Seward, stop across at Payton's and pick up a loaf of bread so I will have it for breakfast in the morning."

Dad replied, "I just went over and picked up a new loaf when I came home."

Mother explained, "The kids finished the whole loaf after supper tonight."

Dad patiently made his way across the street for his second purchase of the day.

Leppo's Store

Peyton's Store had a competitor a half-block east on West Street; it was called Leppo's. Mother felt sorry for the old man who had such a small store. I recall the meat case only held small quantities of hamburger, hot dogs, and lunch meat. Mother insisted that we buy some things from Leppo even if it was further up the street, because she said that he needed to live, too. We were always told to get the meat from Payton's, because there was a regular meat counter presided over by the owner. It occupied most of the west side of the grocery.

My children have all attended Iowa State "College," as we called it in my younger days. On occasion I would take them to Dugan's Deli for a sandwich. This was the location of West Street Grocery. Each time I would look across the street to our house, I would imagine taking some grocery item back across the street and up the concrete steps to our house again. As I observed the beer being served, I could also imagine my mother storming into the Deli to complain loudly at the thought of beer being served so close to our home.

Chapter Seven

Some Jobs That I Had

My First Paper Route

Another snapshot from my mind has me delivering newspapers on an Ames Daily Tribune route. My route covered all streets between Howard and Franklin. I went as far north as Dorothy Peterson's house, down Ellis, along West Street, and then south on Willmouth. Since there were houses only on the east side, I crossed through a pasture to get to South Franklin. I always had one eye watching the bull that sometimes was kept there. Then I came back north again. There were houses only on the west side of the street. One stop just before crossing Lincoln Way was the CCC Camp located at Franklin and Lincoln Way. The boys there never had any money to buy several papers, but they pooled together to share one. Sometimes they gave me candy and joked with me.

The subscription was 15 cents a week; I collected every Friday night. I quickly learned all multiples of 15 from 2 to 8. One family kept telling me to "come back next week" until they owed me for 8 weeks. When I came the ninth Friday, I discovered an empty house. The neighbors told me that they moved. I was out \$1.20, and I was not happy about it. Each Saturday morning I took the bus to the paper office on Fifth. I paid my bill, put some small amount into the "bond" which paid me 1% on my deposit as interest. Then I went across the street and treated myself to a 10-cent hamburger and a nickel "coke." That building is still standing today, but it is in very bad shape.

Ways That I Earned Some Money

What could a kid do to get some money for candy, gum, ice cream and other necessities? That was constantly on my mind after we moved to West Street and my world started to expand.

I learned from a friend when I was attending school at Roosevelt in Ames that Fudgesickle bar sticks sometimes said "Free" on the inside end. If you got one of the sticks that said that, you could redeem it for a free Fudgesickle. He showed me a stick his parents had that said "Free" on it. This put me to work. I visited both of the neighborhood stores on West Street, Leppo's and West Street Grocery, that was operated by the Paytons. I picked up each stick I found on the ground and looked it over carefully.

Next I went down to Dogtown, the campus area, and looked along the curbs and around the bus stops to locate them. I even went up on Knapp and looked in the dirt around the front of Beatty's Store. I never was successful at finding a "Free" stick, but I sure tried for a long time.

Then I decided, as almost all kids eventually do, that I would set up a Kool-Aid stand. I got a large wooden crate from the back yard that my dad used to put kindling into as he chopped it up. I dumped the kindling on the ground and loaded the crate into my wagon. Then I got my mother to help me mix up a lot of red Kool-Aid in a large kettle that had a lid. I took four small juice glasses and rolled them up in a towel to keep from breaking them. I next made a large crayoned sign that said "Kool-Aid 2 cents a glass." I took the ice pick and chipped several chunks of ice from the block of ice in the icebox. This went into the Kool-Aid to keep it cool. All of this went in the wagon which I pulled two blocks up West Street to the corner of West Street and Sheldon Avenue. This was a very busy corner which we called West Gate. The bus stopped here, also.

A large elm tree gave me plenty of good shade as I set up my stand and waited for business. The glasses were lined up on top of the box, and the Kool-Aid kettle was placed on top with a large lid to keep it clean. The traffic was good, and I did a fine business. Every twenty minutes another bus came and dropped off passengers. I placed the dirty glasses under the top of the box, and after the customer left and no one else was around, I would dry them off with the towel and put them back on top. I made about 30 cents for the

effort, but I must confess to a heavy thirst myself. A health inspector would have fainted, but no one ever noticed that part.

My grandmother, Anna McGee, worked as a maid at Mary B. Welch Hall, a girls' dormitory at Iowa State College. Her sister, Olga, worked in the next dorm to the east. They would call me at the end of each quarter, as the girls moved out and threw things away. All trash was swept out into the halls, and I would go through it and pick up pop bottles and coat hangers. Cardinal Cleaners, a dry cleaner on West Street, gave me a half penny for each coat hanger that was in good condition. I worked the bent ones over with a pliers, but the cleaners rejected the worst ones. Usually I would get from 50 to 70 cents each quarter, and there were three quarters in a year. The spring quarter always gave up the most coat hangers, as all of the girls left then. I continued to do this for several years until my mother decided that I was too old to be running around in the girls' dorms. The pop bottles brought me two cents each.

By now I was old enough for a night paper route so I got Mother's permission. I carried the Ames Daily Tribune for a couple of years. My route covered Howard to Franklin and all streets between them in the west part of town. I had to get one dollar from my mother for what the newspaper office called a "bond." I was told that I'd get this back, with interest, when I quit. Each week I had to put 5 cents more into my bond. We were given a small book, like a bank book, where they recorded the amounts. This route was supposed to give me a profit of about \$1.00 per week. I quickly learned that sometimes I would have to borrow money to pay my paper bill. Some people would tell me to "... come back next week" when I tried to collect from them. The paper cost 15 cents a week, and I soon learned all multiples of 15 up to \$1.50; I can still rattle them off today.

As I got older I convinced my mother that the Ames paper routes were for babies. I wanted a morning route for the Des Moines Register as it paid more money. I carried one of these routes until I went into the ninth grade. My route started at the Lincoln Apartments at the corner of Lincoln Way and Sheldon and ran west to Campus Avenue and north to Oakland. Later I carried a route just to the west of that one. This gave me more money. I recall that I always stopped in Peterson Drug after I finished my collections and bought Mother a GoldBrick candy bar. It was a very tiny chocolate bar with a creamy center. Each bar cost ten cents while most other candy bars cost five cents, but my mother loved them.

At the start of World War II our college campus housed two large government training programs. One was the V-5 Air Corps training program for future aviators, and the other was the V-12 Naval training program for future sailors. The V-12's were housed in Hughes Hall diagonally opposite the College Savings Bank located in Campustown, which we all usually called Dog-town. However, they had rules that confined them to the building during the week nights. When I learned this, I hung around the front door of the building, and, for a fee, rented my services as a runner. The guys gave me money and I got them candy, pop, ice cream and other items they wanted for snacks. A very small restaurant was located on the corner just west of the bank on Lincoln Way. I charged 5 or 10 cents for each trip depending on how much I was to carry, and I did a thriving business. I also learned that most of the guys opened the windows and tossed the pop bottles back out, so I hung around and picked them up for the two-cent deposit.

From the junior high school principal, John Harlan, I found out that a delivery boy was needed at Spriggs Pharmacy in Dogtown, south of Lake LaVerne. I hurried down after school one night and applied. The job paid me 40 cents a night, and I was supposed to walk around the campus part of Ames and deliver things for the store. Mostly I delivered prescriptions, cigarettes, and some other things that I later learned were sanitary supplies for the college girls living in the dormitories and sororities. Each night after school I walked to the drug store and sized up the pile of packages and arranged them into loads. I took all I could carry, delivered them, and returned to the store for another load. I was usually done by about 5 or 5:30.

One day when I came to work, the owner of the store, Jack Spriggs, took me into the back room and showed me a brand new 20-inch bicycle that he bought for me to use. He told me that the bike would belong to the store, and I was to leave it there each night. I could only ride it for my deliveries. This really speeded things up a great deal.

A year later I went to work for Spriggs as a soda jerk; at this time he told me just to keep the bike. I stayed with him through my high school days, starting at 40 cents an hour and ending upon graduation at 50 cents an hour. It was a good job, and both he and his wife, Irma, treated me like a son.

Soda Jerk

When I was in eighth grade at Welch School in the Dog-town part of Ames, I took a job in the Spriggs Pharmacy, that was owned and operated by Gaylord Spriggs and his wife Irma. This was during the Second World War. I began this job in 1942. Since I was too young to wait on customers, I made deliveries after school and swept out the store on Saturday mornings. Then I was promoted to putting stock on the shelves from the large supply stored in the basement.

During the summer between my eighth and ninth grade years, I was asked, "Do you want to learn to be a soda jerk?" I surely did, as the job seemed so exciting and I could start earning some more money. I was trained by "Jack" Spriggs about how to make the sodas, sundaes, malts, and dip out cones. It came easily, and before a week was past, I was working the counter alone during the day. Irma helped out in the evenings when the theater traffic filled the store.

Those were very busy days at the store as this was a college town, and we had the closest malt shop to the campus and dormitories. The Navy ran a V-12 training program and the Army ran a V-5 flight school that brought in many additional young servicemen who spent a lot of time at the store. There was another drugstore in this part of Ames, but it did not have a soda fountain. We really had the business.

Soon my right forefinger grew a big callous that was to remain with me until after I entered the service five years later. It was my "badge of honor", as it told all that I had dished up a great amount of ice cream. As I scooped up the ice cream, the dipper rubbed against that finger.

The ice cream sodas were always started with a shot of syrup and a small amount of ice cream. This was mixed with a long spoon into a stiff paste. Then pushing in on the lever of the carbonated water, toward the customer, a fine stream of carbonated water was shot into the tall soda glass. The glass was rotated to mix it all up. After the glass was about half full of this mixture, I put in two large scoops of ice cream, usually vanilla, and then pulled forward on the carbonated water lever to fill the glass without the stream under pressure. The long-handled spoon was left in the glass, and the soda was pushed across the narrow marble counter to the customer, along with a Coke glass filled with water.

The sundaes were started by putting two large scoops of ice cream, usually vanilla, into the "tulip" ice cream dish. These glass dishes were very heavy. Seldom was one broken. The top of the sundae was covered with a syrup from the rectangular fountain jars. They had stainless steel tops with a dipper attached to the underside of the lid. Names of the toppings were printed on the white porcelain portion of the handle. We had chocolate, cherry, strawberry, butterscotch, and pineapple. In a separate container on the back bar and plugged into an outlet was the hot chocolate container. This was a very popular topping, but the hot chocolate sundaes were always a nickel extra. Another container, this one without the attached ladle, was opened to expose a selection of cherries. Each sundae was garnished with a cherry. At a much later date, I have observed whipped cream put on top from a spray can. We never had such, and, since it was so hard to keep whipped cream fresh, we usually had to omit this important part of the ritual.

The malts were served in the same heavy glass containers that were used for the sodas, but they were not used to mix the malts. I started with about a half scoop of ice cream and the desired flavor in a stainless steel cylinder that had one big indentation near the bottom. I added a bit of milk and then put the container in the high speed Aldus Speed Mixer. The metal container could easily slip out of my hand, if I did not have a firm grip on the base of the can along the indentation. This malt mixer was operated by pulling forward on a lever, which lifted the can up into the two blades of the mixer. Then it rotated at a very high speed. As the mixer operated, frost quickly accumulated on the can. A loose grip on the can might cause it

to spin out of the hand! The result was usually malt "on the house" as the can flew off the mixer. I usually held on tight.

After the malt had been mixed enough, I pushed back on the lever and the can was lowered and the mixer blades stopped rotating. Finally I pushed in on the lever; the can stayed down in the lower position, but the blades rotated very rapidly in reverse to spin the ice cream off the blades. The malt was then poured into the tall glass and served to the customer with a long-handled spoon inserted. Sometimes, if I put in too much ice cream, there was a bit left over. I placed the excess on the drainboard above the sink. If the customer asked, I served it to them. If they did not ask, I usually drank what was left over in the can after they left the store. Young people always asked. Grandmothers and grandfathers seldom asked.

Saturday morning was always a very busy time for me. The soda fountain had few customers, but it was clean up day. I first took all of the glasses off the back bar. They were stored there upside down on two levels. Six large soda glasses held up a long piece of plate glass to form the shelf. The small coke glasses were stored on top, and the larger coke glasses and sundae glasses were stored underneath. The large malt glasses were stored alone on another part of the bar. The marble slab was scrubbed clean with soapy water and rinsed clean with hot water and towels.

Then glasses were all washed, dried, and put back. The larger glasses were set up first, as I built the shelving again of glasses and glass. The plate glass was washed and dried and put atop the soda glass posts and then the small glasses were washed and put on top.

The cash register even had a small marble plate atop the cash drawer which needed to be polished. One time, in jest, I took a wax pricing pencil and put a wavy line along one corner. Jack "nearly died" as he thought I had cracked the marble. No more jokes from me about that!

Next the fountain had to be completely taken apart. All topping jars were removed from their places just under the counter. They slipped into an angled shelf above the fountain and just below the customer's marble surface. Each topping had to be poured and/or scraped into a #10 can, usually one in which the topping came. Then the heavy rectangular white jars were washed thoroughly and the topping replaced from the can. The top was wiped very clean and polished. The jars were set aside on the back bar until all had been cleaned. The area in which the jars sat usually had a small amount of water on the bottom. This moisture accumulated, as the cooling coils were under this shelf. This caused a thick, sickening slime to form; I hated this part of the cleaning. Just picking up the slime to put into the bucket under the sink made me shudder.

Then this area was completely scrubbed with sponges, soap, and water to get it very clean. When rinsed and sponged dry, I finished it off with old towels to get it clean and dry. Then the jars of syrup were put back in exactly the same order. Jack became upset if I changed the order; I soon learned the reason. On a busy night after the movies let out, the eight-stool counter was three deep in customers, with a half dozen at the end. No time could be wasted in reading the various syrup labels.

Then the ice cream storage part of the base unit, which held up the counter top and the ice cream toppings, needed to be cleaned. This was the freezer part and usually required the least effort. The lids had black rubber edges and two lids hinged together. Both could be lifted up and out of the unit. The working ice cream was found in this unit, with two five-gallon metal containers in each section - one in front and one in back. The front was the unit that was used and the back was a spare unit with a lid still attached. The units were heavy when they were full of ice cream, but they could be lifted up and out by means of a small metal handle that hooked over a rim on the side. In the beginning, I had a hard time lifting them out and had to stand on tip toe. I was so short, and I had to lift high enough to let the tall cans clear the freezer.

I ran a scraper down all four sides of the freezer to get the excess frost off. This was then taken out of the bottom by hand and by means of a scraper affair that I fashioned out of cardboard. Then the ice cream cans were returned. If the front can had only a little left in it, I pulled the back one forward and then took an ice cream spade and cleaned the rest out by pushing it down along the sides. This was then piled on top of the full can. Another full can was brought up from the back room to put behind the front can.

The sink was completely scrubbed; the bucket of trash under the sink was emptied and returned to sit directly under the hole in the counter through which trash, such as napkins, was pushed. Next I took a stainless bucket from beneath the sink, went into the freezer in the back room, and got my ice tongs, and lifted up a 50-pound block of ice and took it to the sink. Then I took a five-pronged ice pick and scraped the block to produce the bucket of crushed ice. This was carried up front and poured into a five-gallon ice cream can to be used for putting in the cokes, limeades, and lemonades. Cherry coke was the big seller and used the most ice.

The remainder of the ice block was crushed in the same manner and put into the backroom freezer to be pulled up front when we ran out. Believe me, we were never to run out when we were busy; an extra can or two was always on hand. It was my job to make sure there was a supply.

Another part of the fountain held ice cream that was to be used for hand packed sales. We always had vanilla, chocolate, and peppermint stick. The latter was pink in color. Mr. Spriggs never varied the selection. By the time I was a senior, he told me to take over the duties of ordering. When Bappe, the deliveryman who drove a hard tired, chain-driven ice cream truck for O'Neil Dairy in Ames, arrived, I asked him what other flavors he had. One time he told me that he had a short can (two gallons) of licorice-flavored ice cream in the truck. I selected that, as I loved licorice. After I had everything all cleaned up and was ready for the noon rush, I quickly made myself a marshmallow sundae with licorice ice cream. The black ice cream and the thick white topping made quite a sundae! I loved it. I couldn't wait to tell my friends. I pushed it all day long as I answered the usual question, "What kind of sundaes do you have?" By evening I had sold only one licorice sundae and that was to my friend, John Bradish, who would eat anything.

By the next day Mr. Spriggs discovered the flavor that I had added, and he had a long talk with me about how he trusted me to make the right decisions, and I had let him down. That licorice ice cream stayed in the store until it got sticky and "stringy" as old ice cream does eventually. Mr. Spriggs told me to throw it out after a couple of weeks, and I was never to order it again. Back I went to the traditional vanilla, chocolate, and peppermint stick.

I was paid 40 cents an hour. I usually ran up a bill of about half what I made at the store, as I bought other items. Mr. Spriggs would always give me a ride home at night after the store closed at 10:00 p.m. The store hours were from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., seven days a week. The only holidays we observed were Christmas and a half-day at Thanksgiving. I cleaned the fountain each night after we closed and mopped the floor if I had time. Later, when I was in high school, Mr. Spriggs gave me a key and I went down in the morning to mop up before I caught the city bus to school.

The days when we were the busiest were the best for me. I became so accomplished that I could grab the soda dish and the ice cream scoop with different hands, flip open the freezer top and make the malts, sodas, and sundaes very fast. I washed the dishes during every lull and emptied the trash bucket. The Spriggses treated me like a son and made sure that I got home, that I got a bike when I needed one, and even offered to send me to go to college. I have pleasant memories of those days, as I learned what it was to work, earn, serve the public, and schedule my life. I would trade those days for nothing.

Mr. Spriggs died during my senior year of school, and the Spriggs Pharmacy was sold the next year. I graduated from Ames High School in 1946. I went into the Army, serving in the occupation of Japan. This I did not out of a sense of patriotism, but because I wanted to use the funds of get the GI Bill for college.

Chapter Eight

Senior High School Days

Random Recollections about Ames, Iowa

The following paragraphs describe memories of life in Ames during the days of World War II. They include some of the favorite places of my youth.

Maid-Rite on Main

The Maid-Rite shop was located on the east end of Main Street. It had a horseshoe-shaped counter. The shop had two front doors which opened to the counter. The proprietor had to enter from the back door. Customers were served cold root beer in frosted mugs, Maid-rites with everything on them, and banana cream pie. I used to come here with George Lande when we tired of the school lunch. On a wall was a motto or saying that I still remember to this day. It read:

"As you wander on through life
Whatever be your goal,
Keep you eye upon the donut
And not upon the hole."

The Sheldon-Munn Hotel

I remember the toilets in the basement of the Sheldon-Munn Hotel. When I went there, I was usually broke and in desperate need. There were pay toilets that required a dime, but one free stall stood at the south end. Many times when I arrived, the free stall was occupied. As a result I lay on my back in front of a stall door, grasped the door over my head, and slid under. One day, to my great surprise, I slid under the door of a stall that was occupied by an older man. He was startled, too, to say the least! I quickly slid out again.

This hotel also served as the bus depot for Greyhound. The busses parked on Kellogg Street so that passengers could load out of the east door of the hotel. Travelers had a choice of many arrivals and departures enabling them to go anywhere from Ames: north or south, east or west. It was from this depot that I left for my Army service in 1946 just after I graduated from high school.

Making Change

When I was working at Spriggs Pharmacy, I had to learn how to make change. First, I put the customer's bill on the shelf above the cash drawer and then started counting the correct change to myself. First, I counted the required pennies, then nickels or dimes to make the next quarter amount, then a quarter to make a half dollar, and then a half dollar to make one dollar. If bills were needed, the same process would take place. Jack Spriggs told me that this was a double check on the amount of money we returned to the customers. First, we counted it out to ourselves, and then we repeated the count as we gave it to the customer. Now, when I make a purchase, the cash register tells the clerk how much change is required, and he or she just hands over a wad of money.

Blackouts and Brownouts

During the war in many major cities, especially on the east and west coast there were actually blackouts, when all lights were extinguished. To my recollection Ames never had a blackout. Twice, when I was working at Spriggs Pharmacy, we experienced a brown-out, where all unnecessary lights were turned off. I recall walking home in the dark west on Lincoln Way to my corner on Campus Avenue. I noticed some

light another block west on Lincoln Way, so I decided to investigate. It was a sign on the front of the frame church at the corner of Howard and Lincoln Way. The neon sign said simply, "Jesus Saves." I hoped that any Japanese bombers which might be coming over Ames wouldn't see the sign - or if they did, then I really hoped that "Jesus would save me."

The Iowa State Campus Playground

Other non-war-time memories are tied to the Iowa State campus, which was my playground. Iowa State had many tennis courts across the street from State Gym. The east three courts were concrete. The other 15 or more were clay courts. After a rain, we had to use the concrete courts as the others became very muddy. The college officials complained loudly if we marked up the clay courts.

For practice, when I was without a partner, I used the bangboards (bank boards, as some called them) just east of State Gym. Here I played tennis, hitting the ball into one of the six half courts in an effort to be a better tennis player, so that I could eventually beat Gerald Murphy. I was not successful at that, though; Marnie Wallace and I played Gerald and Margie Webber a match one time, though. My side lost. After the match, we adjourned to the Union for a dime malt.

Lawn Bowling

Many of the professors from Iowa State played a gentleman's game of lawn bowling. They would park their cars along the street east of the gym and move to lawn bowling lanes to the east of the bang boards. Here the grass was trimmed so that it was like a golf green. Lines marked out the lanes. Each team laid down a canvas on which they placed the oval balls. The balls were round in one dimension, oval in the other, which caused them to roll properly as long as they had speed. When the ball slowed, the oval shape took over and the ball would curve and finally lie flat on the grass. When the ball was flat, it could not be moved very easily.

One man started each inning (frame, if you like) and rolled a spherical white ball down the lane. This was the target. Then each in turn would roll black balls trying to stay close to the white ball. After the last ball was rolled, the scorer took out a tape measure and determined the ball closest to the white ball. One point was given for each black ball that was closest. It was possible to score three points, for example, if the other team did not have a ball closer than the other team's three balls. I watched them play nearly every night. They had some kind of league.

Veishea at Iowa State

Ah, the Veishea's we saw! Every year I went to the parade. Then I would roam the campus, generally hitting all of the places that had free food. The home economics department was always good for the cherry pies. I would coax one of the spoiled pies from the girls for free. Then I went to the dairy industry building where they made ice cream bars. If none of them in the line were mistakes, I could coax a student to mess one up so that he could give it to me. One time, so many years ago, I was startled in the engineering building to watch them cook hot dogs on a block of ice. This was the early days of the microwave. Of course I could get several hot dogs free.

One time my brother, David, and my sister, Gloria, were dressed up in sailor suits with white sailor caps and sat on a float in the parade. I stood along the parade route with my Brownie box camera to capture the scene on film. The pictures were developed by Dean's Studio in Des Moines. I imagine that picture is in a set of pictures that Gloria took with her when our father died.

Veishea was always a student-run activity. The students invest a lot of time and effort into creating a nice weekend to showcase the college. In recent years it has been marred with alcohol-related problems such as riots and even a murder. Pres. Jischke is trying to remove alcohol from the event.

The War

How well I remember the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. I was 13 years old at the time. The flu had confined me to my home. I slept on the couch in the living room that afternoon while Mother went to visit a neighbor. Soon, she came hurrying up the front steps and into the house. Before she removed her coat, she called the family to come to the radio. It was a cabinet piece that had an on/off knob and a round celluloid dial with a yellow light to show the station numbers.

She dialed it to 1040 which was the WHO radio station in Des Moines. We heard the announcer saying that Pearl Harbor had been bombed by the Japanese and that many of our ships had been sunk. "Where is Pearl Harbor?" I asked. She did not know, so we listened and learned that it was in Hawaii. The reports kept coming in all afternoon. We all sat there listening and worrying. My first thought was that maybe planes were now flying to Ames. I listened for the sound of airplanes.

On Monday, December 8th, I listened to President Roosevelt address Congress and call for a declaration of war against the Japanese. If I recall correctly, only one member of Congress voted against the declaration. Roosevelt came back to Congress on the 11th of December to ask for a declaration of war against Germany. We called Germany and Italy the Axis powers. I think it was Claire Booth Luce. Our forces were called the Allied powers.

My father, who served with the Rainbow Division in France during the First World War in 1917-1918, listened carefully and speculated that he might be called up again. I fantasized that maybe I would get out of school to enlist in the Air Corps and become a hero. For a time, I was afraid that the war would be over before I got out of high school. As the war dragged on, I began to fear that it would not be over before I graduated.

The early news was all bad for us. We were ill-prepared for a war, so we took heavy losses in many places. Soon posters appeared with slogans like "Slap a Jap," "Loose lips sink ships," and "Buy War Bonds." We soon got involved with saving things for the war effort.

Soon we experienced rationing. The War Production Board decided which things needed to be conserved. Of course, rubber, gas, oil, and some foods were immediately rationed. All rubber production went to the war effort, as the Far East had been a major supplier of our rubber. Silk was not available any more as all that we had went into the production of parachutes. The Japanese had the silk worms, from which silk fibers came.

The Office of Price Administration took over the pricing allowances to overcome the tendency to raise the prices of commodities in short supply. They issued red tokens which we could use for meat. We had to have money to buy the meat, but we also had to have enough red points to complete the purchase. I do recall Mother saving up her red points for special meals when company came. Stamps were issued for other items, such as sugar, shoes, oil, lard, butter, and other things that I no longer recall.

Each person in the household had shoe stamps. Since the kids outgrew their shoes and wore them out quickly, my father had to try to repair our shoes himself. He had a shoe stand called a "shoe last." I was intrigued with the name "last." I told my Dad, "He who lasts last, lasts best." He did not see my sense of humor. The last held a shoe, sole up, so he could try to put another sole on top of the original one. The original sole had a big hole in it. He used a tack hammer with a magnetized head. He put several shoe nails in his mouth, put the tack hammer to his mouth to put one nail on the hammer head, and then drove the nail along the edge of the sole. Of course, sometimes the nail went too far from the edge of the sole, so that when we put the shoe back on, the point stuck us. It was a real challenge for him to cut new leather to fit and to nail the sole in place.

Later, there appeared in the stores soles that could be glued on instead of having to be nailed in place. This sounded like a great idea to him and also to me. I had to wear the shoe with an errant nail that worked its way loose while I was wearing it. Dad glued these soles on the shoes of my sister, Gloria, and my brother,

David. He and Mother were disappointed that they had a tendency to come loose if worn for a long time in the rain. Apparently the glue was not very good.

When I got a hole in my shoe and my Father did not have time to repair it, I would cut up pieces of cardboard in the shape of the foot and put them inside my shoe. This was a very temporary repair as cardboard did not wear well on sidewalks.

Mother was a very good cook, though my brother, David, does not agree. She made us use honey for a sweetener for cereal and general use so she could save her sugar stamps for canning fruit. She did learn to bake cakes with sugar substitutes. We had to make do with what we had. We did not complain as we knew that we would have to conserve to help the war effort.

I must report, also, that a black market did develop with gasoline in the later days of the war. If a person did not have enough gas stamps, these black market stamps were generally available for a price. Many town people resented their country cousins who had access to the tractor gasoline barrel. If we wanted to travel to another town for ballgames, those in the country were more easily able to drive to the games. Most of the people in Ames did their best to conserve. The newspaper, the radio stations, and the Boy Scouts did their best to help with the collections.

With our abundance of all kinds of things today, it is hard for us to think of doing without. In times of war it became a necessity. And we were glad to do it.

I think that World War II is the last war that the United States has been involved in where Congress declared war. The Korean, Viet Nam, Grenada, and the Gulf Wars have all been police actions invoked by the President.

I Missed the Bus, Again

Since I lived in the Fourth Ward, "Dog-town" to most of us, I used the bus for transportation to and from school. The bus stopped on the corner of West and Campus streets right across from Peyton's Grocery. We had two bus routes in town. One bus was called the Crosstown, the other the Downtown. We could get transfers, connections being made at Fifth and Kellogg. I usually managed to stay in bed until the last possible moment before the bus came each morning for school. Sometimes, I lingered too long and missed it. Then I had a breathless run the two blocks south on Campus to Lincoln Way where, if I was speedy enough, I could catch the bus as it came back from the Franklin corner. Many times I was not quick enough and I had to hitchhike or wait 20 minutes for the next bus. On those occasions, the office secretary who had a slight lisp would say to me, "Tho, you misthed the bus again, Edwin?"

Indefinite Seventh Period

I think that I probably held the record for being assigned to Seventh Period in my high school career. I had a knack for memorizing numbers. To be clever, I would hang around someone as she opened her locker to see what the combination was. Then I would try it out after she left and "set" the lock. Then I would meet the locker owner after the class and stand at her locker. In a "smarty pants" way I would dramatically open the locker for her. When I got home I would write the combination in a small address book that I had. I must have learned at least 40 different combinations of classmates. My fun ended dramatically after one girl, I never learned who, reported me to Herb Adams, our principal. He called me in and asked how I was able to open her locker. I spilled the beans and told him about my hobby. When he learned that I had a book of combinations at home, he sent me home and called my mother. I had to leave school that day and get the book.

While riding back to school on the bus, I figured that I had far too many combinations, so I carefully tore several of the small pages out of the book. After I presented the much smaller book to him, he read the names and numbers and then announced that I was being assigned "Indefinite Seventh Period." My protests about my job in the drug store after school fell on deaf ears. When I asked him if anyone had

reported the loss of anything from their lockers, he didn't answer me. After about six weeks of Seventh Period, where I sat in the Study Hall doing my penance, he called me back to the office and told me that my punishment ended. He warned me to never again gather and write down any more locker combinations. I knew at least a dozen that were in my head, but I didn't mention that to him. I never acted smart and opened up anyone else's locker again.

Moore Bros. Dairy

What a special occasion it was to go to the Moore Bros. Dairy and order a hot fudge sundae with nuts! This was a real treat after coming back from a movie at the Collegian Theater around the corner or while waiting for the bus home. The clerks worked inside a sunken horseshoe shaped counter. They quickly mixed the sodas, sundaes, and other treats.

The Cyclone Center

I spent quite a bit of time in our youth center which was located in the 400 block on Main Street. It was named the "Cyclone Center." Booths were located on the east wall where we sat and drank cokes and talked. The west wall was occupied by a soda fountain with about 6 stools. The back room was available for ping-pong games. The tables were taken down when we had dances there. One time I recall trying to learn how to jitterbug, in classes taught by some college girls. My feet would just not connect with the music. I volunteered several hours a week to work the fountain as a soda jerk, since this was my job at Spriggs Pharmacy in "Dog Town" all of my high school years. Pee Wee (Bob) Dailey, was the custodian so he had keys. He frequently let his friends in while he was cleaning and I can state that some of the ice cream disappeared while we were there.

The Wading Pool at Brookside

I recall, as a very young person, going to Brookside Park. First I went with my parents and we waded in the concrete wading pool that had a fountain in the center. A very small zoo was kept in the north part of the park. There was a brown bear, a couple of raccoons, two monkeys, and a red fox that were in cages. I recall riding my bike to the zoo to feed peanuts to the raccoons. This was later removed when it was learned that people would go into the park at night and torment the animals.

Norma Hammond

Norma Hammond and I worked as soda jerks at Spriggs Pharmacy for a couple of years. One day when I had chipped a bucket of ice and put it into the fountain, I took one piece and waited until Norma had turned to face me and tossed it at her. It went down her neck and she had to jump up and down to get it out. Jack Spriggs later took me aside and told me that it wasn't very nice to put ice down a girl's front like that. Another time, I was sitting on a stool as Norma was working, and I heard something hit the floor and roll around. Leaning over the counter, I saw a small button and I recall saying something like "Oh, oh, something is going to happen now." Then Norma hurried from behind the fountain seeking refuge behind the nut counter. I later learned that her satin underwear was held up with a button instead of elastic and she lost her "drawers" as she hid behind the counter. I worked at the drugstore from 8th grade, first as a delivery boy, and then as a soda jerk. Business was very good and Mr. Spriggs then hired Norma to work with me.

The V-5 and V-12 Programs at Iowa State

I recall the V-5 and the V-12 programs at Iowa State when I was in school. I served malts to the flyers in the V-5 program. I listened with excitement as they recounted their flight progress. One trainee was really rattled one night when he came in for his malt. His friends told me that he landed on top of another

airplane, wrecking both of them. They made him take off immediately in another plane before he could protest - otherwise they feared he would be psyched out and maybe could not fly the next day.

Later, when I was working for the drugstore, I would take Mr. Spriggs car and make an ice cream run to Friley Hall. One V-12 person called in the order of half-quarts and I met him at the back door. He gave me the cash and I gave him the ice cream. I said half-quarts instead of pints. Two pints cost more than a quart so the V-12 had me cut the quarts in half with a butcher knife as I loaded them into boxes for delivery.

A Speech That Flopped

Christian Peterson was the campus sculptor who built the fountains at the Dairy Industry building, to the north of the Memorial Union and at the Veterinarian Quadrangle. One year, when I had Edna (Gus) Wilcox as a teacher, we were assigned to interview some person in town and give a report. I chose Christian Peterson, because I liked his sculptures and his reliefs which were located on the outside of State Gym. His statues of two students still are found at the original entrance to the College Library.

I arranged for an interview as he worked on a piece of limestone in his studio on the campus. He was patient with me, answering all of my silly questions such as "Where did you come from?" (answer, Denmark), and "When did you start as an artist?" (as a young man), and other routine questions. I thanked him and returned home to write my speech.

When the day came for me to give my speech, I was very nervous. I got up in front of the class, tried to tell myself that I really did not need to go to the bathroom again, as I had just gone, and in a timid voice I began my story of Mr. Peterson. By the end of the speech, I knew that all had gone well, until I got to my last sentence. I reported, "And this just goes to prove that you can get ahead in life even if you are a chiseler."

The class erupted with laughter, but Miss Wilcox gave me a D grade. She told me that I was being disrespectful to a fine artist. I thought it was just plain funny.

Classmates and Times Past

While looking over a list of the names of classmates past, I pause and wonder who some of them were. The names sound familiar, but I can't connect a face or experience to them. Others bring back a flood of memories. I stop and reflect on them. I suppose that what I remember about them may not even be recalled by them. Yet, to me, today, they all seem so real.

Bob Fitch, last seen loping down Knapp Street, had a bouncy kind of walk that told me who he was a block away. When I first met Bob I wondered if he was related to the discoverer of Fitch Shampoo. The company had a slogan that they played in a radio commercial nearly every day. It was "Don't despair, use your head, save your hair, use Fitch Shampoo."

Bob Loomis taught me everything I know about sex. After a search for garter snakes along College Creek to the east of Welch School, we were lying in the grass when Bob pulled out a handwritten letter from his pocket. He read to us the wonders of sex. At the time, we all pretended as though it were common knowledge to all of us wizened junior high school boys. I thought to myself, "It just can't be!" Bob, I later found out that you were right.

Gerald Murphy, or Murph to us, was always a competitor. We played box hockey at the Welch playground program in the summer. I seldom won. At softball he was always one of the captains. Sometimes, when we were choosing sides, he would pick me near the end of the selection process. Pauline Gibbs was a much better batter, but I suspected that she did not close her eyes like I did when the ball got close. She was usually picked ahead of me.

One time at the Welch playground, in a game of workup, I got to be catcher. I couldn't have been more eager to perform well and get up to bat next. As one pitch came toward the plate, I moved up to be sure to catch it. The batter swung and knocked me over the plate. That delayed the game. The kids all rushed to the plate. One of the teachers took me inside to check the lump on my head. Murphy was the batter, but it was my fault that I got too close.

Jimmy Horn and I were opponents in tennis. The school had two clay tennis courts that were fenced in. The school had some tennis racquets that we could use during P. E., but we wanted to play before school. Jimmy lived on Ellis Street across from Pauline. I asked my dad if he could get me a tennis racquet. He said that we did not have the money, but he would try to make me one. He came up with an oversized paddle, which I took to school. I needed a partner, so Dad made another one for Jimmy. He and I played on the tennis court with our paddles.

Marnie Wallace, My Partner in Badminton

My lack of athletic ability was apparent in many sports. I tried them all, usually without success. One day we had a special mixed doubles badminton tournament in the Welch gym after school. This was to be part of a special party that had been planned for a long time. I needed a partner, so I screwed up my courage to write a note to Marnie Wallace during English class. I asked her if she would be my partner in the tournament. The note was passed up to her about three seats away. She read the note, then turned in her seat and nodded "yes." I was ecstatic. I hurried to sign us up and make plans for the big party. Two nets were strung side by side in the gym. We lost our first game and switched sides to the north side. I was determined to win the next two matches. I served and Marnie played next to the net. During a brief volley, I feared that she would not return a shot. I raced forward swinging my racquet. The racquet broke over the back of her head and she fell to the floor. I feared that I had really hurt her. The teacher rushed over and helped her to the bleachers. She sat there and tried not to cry as the teacher examined her head. One of her friends looked at me like I was the most stupid kid in the school. She told me that her head hurt and that she was going to go home. That was the end of my competition and the end of my romance with Marnie.

Golf Was My Game, Until I Quit

Thinking that golf might be my game, I salvaged an old set of clubs that were given to me by a resident of the apartment house next door. The clubs all had wooden shafts, some that were a bit warped. The clubs all had names. There was a Mid Iron, Mashie, Niblick, Putter, Spoon, Wedge, and a Brassie. I had a left-handed driver that I used right-handed with amazing results. A tee shot on the #1 hole at Homewood Golf Course startled the other players in the club house. It went right through the screen on the porch, far from the fairway that most players aimed for. John Bradish was my companion on many of these early rounds. I was a constant player on the putting green behind the State Gym on the Iowa State campus. There were three holes there, and I practiced many hours.

Playing one time with a group of older kids, I happened to be standing too far in front, and an errant shot by Ray Kincheloe hit me on the arm. It began to swell up. Finally it got so stiff that I had to quit playing. I walked back to 13th Street and Duff and caught the bus for home.

Polo

One game that I watched but never tried was polo. During Veishea, I went to a field north of the campus to watch this game. The players were dressed in red shirts on one team and blue shirts on the other. They wore black helmets and fancy riding pants. The horses galloped up and down the field, as the players drove a white ball with a long-handled club. I watched in amazement as the ball sailed through a net at one end of the field. This could be my sport, but I was afraid of horses.

I Won At Tennis - On the Bang Boards

The bang board east of State Gym was the site of much of my tennis practice. There were six wooden stalls there, three on the north, three on the south. I preferred to use the north side, as there was a fence behind me. If I happened to hit the ball too hard, and missed it on the return, I would not have to run so far to retrieve it. A white line was painted on the board to indicate where the net would be. I managed to defeat many accomplished players on these courts. If I was alone, I would talk to myself and keep score out loud. I won games against Budge, Tilden, or other great tennis players. I never suffered a loss on the practice bang boards.

Ready for Tennis

I was ready for the big time. One summer I recall playing partners with Margie Webber against Murphy and Joyce Peterson. We played on the concrete courts across the street from State Gym. There must have been twenty courts there, all fenced in. Most were clay courts and did not have nets up except during college games. The east three courts were concrete and had nets up all of the time. Murphy was an excellent player. When we were seniors, I recall playing him a set. As we were leaving, he told me that he wanted to get good enough to get a tennis scholarship in a college.

Maybe Softball For Me

Softball was the most popular sport when we were young. A vacant lot behind Pauline Gibbs' house was at a lower elevation than the houses around there. I imagine that is why no houses were built there. The whole gang would gather there to play ball. It was a safer place to play than at the end of West Street as there were no cows. At the West Street field, we used cow pies for the bases. Here we used rocks, caps, or anything to mark the diamond. Jimmy Horn, Pauline Gibbs, Dorothy Schanche, Dorothy Peterson, Max Wilhelm, Gerald Murphy, and many others played here all of the time. We played nearly every night until it got dark. Sometimes we played croquet here, also.

One time when I was pitching and Pauline was the batter, she hit a foul ball into the weeds beyond third base. I ran over to hunt for the ball. I found it, but right next to it was a croquet ball that we had apparently lost earlier. I had a bright idea. I picked up the croquet ball and stuffed it into my mitt. I yelled, "I found it," and ran back to the pitcher's mound. I concealed the croquet ball in my mitt and pitched it to Pauline. She gave a mighty swing and connected with a solid hit. The bat gave out a "Twang!" sound. Pauline dropped the bat and rubbed her hands together. The ball did not go very far. The other players laughed, as did I, but I was ready to run in case Pauline took after me. Recently, I received a cartoon from Pauline that showed a character throwing a bowling ball at the batter. She wrote on the cartoon the name of Ed for the pitcher and Paulie for the batter.

Riding In and On the Ford

Payer, Berhow, Bradish, Thiel, and I would frequently ride places in Don's green Model T Ford coupe. Sometimes Bob Daley and Bob Swanson would also go along. I can't imagine how we ever got seven of us in that car. Since I was the smallest, I had to ride on the ledge behind the seat in front of the back window. Payer drove. We had three riding in the trunk, holding the lid up with their legs sticking out the back of the car. To get gas in those ration times, we at least once resorted to thievery. We went to the L-Way Cafe, which was managed by Dres Thiel's dad, and got some number 10 cans and went to the gas stations and drained the hoses into the can, which we then poured into the gas tank. I doubt if we ever got more than a cupful from each hose.

Ford In the Hall

I recall one morning when I came to school. My locker was located in the West Hall. As I came from my homeroom to my locker, I did a double-take. There was a Model T Ford in the hallway. I looked the car over carefully and it was not even scratched. Then I checked the west double doors of the school. I discovered that the wooden strip between the doors could be removed with a screwdriver at the top and bottom. With both doors open and the strip removed, the car could be pushed in - a tight squeeze, but it fit. Then the strip was put back in place. How the people who put it there ever got past the janitors or the police I will never figure out. The janitors were as surprised as anyone when they got on the scene. (It sounds like I was in on the plan, but I really do not know who did it.)

AHS Memories

I remember riding in Don Payer's green Model T Ford heading west on Main Street. Dick Berhow sat next to the door on the passenger side. I was in the middle of the only seat the car had. As we neared the underpass bridge, the right front wheel came off the car and rolled on ahead of us, down the steps, and bounced onto Highway 69. Dick jumped out of the car and chased it down the steps. Fortunately, he was able to retrieve the wheel before someone hit it. He brought it back up the steps, and we jacked the car up and put the tire back on. The lug nuts had come loose and fell off. No harm done, except maybe to Don's pride. Think of the chaos such an incident would cause today on that busy highway.

Fishing the Des Moines River

After a conversation with John Bradish, who now lives in Oregon, he recalled the time that Payer, Berhow, Thiel, Bradish, and I went fishing one night. We left when it was dark and stumbled with flashlights through farmers' fields to find the Des Moines River. We fished until very late, catching mostly snags. We fell asleep on the bank of the river beside the small fire we built. In the morning we were awakened by cows moving all around us. I doubt if we really caught any fish.

They Messed Up My Food

When I was in high school it was necessary for me to eat in the school cafeteria. The school was downtown, and I lived in "Dogtown." One time after I got my food and went to the table to eat, I discovered that I'd forgotten a fork. I left my plate at the table and went back to the line. When I returned I discovered that someone, probably a friend, had mixed my mashed potatoes, gravy and chocolate pie into one big gooey mess. So much for trusting a friend!

Dance Lessons

Prior to my senior prom, I decided that I had better learn how to dance. I learned that lessons were going to be given upstairs in the J. C. Penney building. Dick Berhow and I decided that we would take them. We entered the building on the west side and climbed up a steep set of stairs to the second floor. Here two girls had a windup phonograph and several records. We each paid 50 cents for the lessons, and the girls tried very hard to get us to move our feet in the right directions in time to the music. I was very nervous and did not have much success. I know that Dick was one of the other guys taking the lessons, but there were at least a dozen of us in the group.

When it came time for the prom, Dick Berhow was my date. I was such a shy guy that I could not get up enough nerve to ask anyone to go the prom. Dick also did not have a date. He and I decided that we would go together and take part in as much of the activities as we could. We had a good time, but I kick myself to this day that I didn't try harder to get a date.

Scrap Paper Drives

There were many drives that I participated in when I was in the Boy Scouts. We held aluminum drives, scrap drives, and paper drives. The newspapers and magazines that we collected were all taken to the Pohlhemus garage on Woodland, just north of Dorothy Petersen's house. They had built a huge wooden press that compacted the paper, which we tied into huge bales. The whole emphasis was on conservation of materials for the war effort. What I heard on the radio one day really cracked my up! The announcement was made for "... all ladies to bring their fat cans to the depot" for collection. I imagined a different type of "fat can."

The Merry Model T by Ed Nass

With his flat-bottomed tires
And his coat of Paris-green,
Coming cross the college flats
Don Payer can be seen.

In his merry Model T
with a pal named Dick,
The old tin can a'bounces
as it crosses old Squaw Creek.

Enroute he picks up others
Two Bobs, one Ed and Brad,
Then D. D. T. is added
And its the biggest load its had.

We hang ourselves all over
And cram ourselves inside,
We sure do crazy things
Just to get a ride.

With his hand upon the throttle
And his foot upon the brake,
He wheels around the corner
And dumps us in the lake.

He tosses out the anchor
We pile back on the trunk,
He shifts the gears from low to high
And drives like he was drunk.

(This poem was written by Ed Nass in 1946. The people mentioned are:
Dick - Dick Berhow, Two Bobs - Bob Swanson, Bob Daley, Ed - Edwin Nass,
Brad - John Bradish, D. D. T. - Dreston Dale Thiel, and of course, Don - Don Payer)

College Education Offers

When I was in 11th grade, Mr. Spriggs called me into the back of the pharmacy for a talk. He explained that they liked me and wanted me to be able to go to college. He explained that he would like for me to become a pharmacist. If I would attend Drake University in Des Moines, he and his wife would pay for my education. I would have to promise to come to work for him after graduation for a period of four years at

regular pay. After that time, I would be free to work anywhere I wanted. He suggested that I think it over and talk about it with my parents.

I was elated, but I was not sure that I wanted to be a pharmacist. One advantage that we had in Ames was that we could use the facilities of the college while we were in high school. The college had some aptitude tests that could be taken by the high school students. I spoke with the guidance counselor, and he made arrangements for me to take a battery of aptitude tests. I went to the college and took the tests. About a week later, I went back for the report. The tests indicated that I was best suited to become a dairy farmer!! I asked how in the world that could be. As I told the examiner, "I don't even know which end of the cow the milk comes from." He indicated that there were other things in addition to the farmer, but I gave up on the whole process. I went home and told Mother and Dad. They both had a good laugh. Then I told Mr. Spriggs, that, while I appreciated the offer more than I could ever tell him, I did not think that pharmacy was in my future. He asked me what I wanted to study, and I could not tell him because I really had no idea. He told me that if I ever changed my mind, I was to let him know. "The offer is still there," he said.

In my senior year, Mr. Spriggs became ill with an ulcer. He died in the spring of my senior year. After the funeral, Mrs. Spriggs came to our home and spoke with me and my parents to assure us that she intended to continue with the offer. That was really nice of her. I thanked her, but I knew for sure that I could never take advantage of the offer. With him gone, she would have a rough time getting along.

While working at Spriggs, I frequently stopped in the Candy Kettle on my way to or from work. A lady and her husband seemed to always be in the store. He generally worked in the back making the candy; she usually worked in front selling it. They invited me to the back room where they showed me how they made the candy in a copper kettle. They made a red, hard candy that was labeled Anise. I knew that I liked it but did not know how to pronounce its name. I went in and ordered a dime's worth of candy, calling it Anus, with a long "a". She smiled and told me that it was pronounced Anise, with a short "a". If I did not have time to stop, I would wave at them as I hurried past.

Soon after Mrs. Spriggs' visit with my family, after her husband died, I got on the bus to go downtown. When the bus stopped at Welch Avenue the lady that operated the Candy Kettle in Campustown got on the bus. After she sat down, she spotted me and motioned for me to come sit with her. I did not know her name but we were friends. As the bus headed for downtown, she told me that she and her husband had no children. They had spoken to Jack Spriggs while he was alive to learn about me and my family. She then said that they wanted to send me to college. I was very surprised; indeed, I was shocked. I told her that Mr. Spriggs wanted to send me to pharmacy school, but that I declined. She seemed to know about that as she told me that I could go anywhere I wanted and study anything that I wanted. When I mentioned to her about working for Mr. Spriggs for four years after graduation, she assured me that I did not have to go to work for them ever.

It was too good to be true. "Talk it over with your parents and think about it. We will talk later," she offered. She got off the bus at her stop. I was flabbergasted. When I got home, I talked about it with Mother. Then I waited up for Dad to get home from work at 11:00 p.m. He was tired, but we talked together for several minutes. They told me to do whatever I wanted.

I thought about it long and hard. I visited with the army recruiter at the post office, where I was told that for two years of service I would qualify for four years of college on the G. I. Bill. Eighteen months would qualify for three years of college. Finally I spoke with the guidance counselor at high school about the Candy Kitchen offer. The counselor suggested that I would probably never get an offer like this again.

After about two weeks of thinking about it, I stopped in the candy store. I told them that I really appreciated their offer, but that I decided I wanted to earn my own way by joining the Army for two years. They were probably disappointed, but they reassured me that if I changed my mind, the offer was still there.

As I stop to think about it after all of these years, it is beyond belief that I would have two offers of college, one with no strings attached. I can never forget the willingness of these people to want to help me.

High School Friends

A few years back, Marj and I went to a surprise 60th birthday party for Don Payer at the country club in Ames. It was a nice party and we had a very good time, even though we knew only a few people besides the Payers. While driving down there and back, I let my mind wander over the past many years and the friendship with the gang of us. I first met Don in 1944. John came first; then Berhow and I renewed acquaintances that we had dating back to confirmation class days at Bethesda Lutheran on Kellogg. Don came next, followed by Swanson and Daley. Of course, the high school days and the old green Model T bring up many, many memorable times as we, usually dateless, explored the town. Skating on Lake LaVerne, going to ball games, trying to learn to dance at the youth center, and going to school brought the collection of us together. Playing Monopoly, later poker, and riding to Des Moines, Boone, and Marshalltown in the green Model T (with some of us packed into the trunk like sardines) were a big part of my life. At a mini-reunion in Colorado Don stated that he didn't ever remember any of us riding on, or in, the trunk. That is probably because he always drove and never had to join us there.

John Bradish, Dick Berhow, Bob "Pee-wee" Daley, Don Payer, Bob Swanson, Dreston Thiel, and I made up quite a gang. I guess that I made up most of the nicknames for the group. I called Berhow "Berp", partly because of his ability to belch on demand. Swanson was called "Swaney" for a time, but it never really stuck. Dreston Dale Thiel was called "DDT" after the new chemical that we used to kill flies at the drugstore. I recall being given a can of it to use to paint the top of the mixed nut case at the store. This was a favorite landing spot for flies because the heat lamps kept it warm. Bradish never had a nickname. This is odd, because he had the ability to eat many hamburgers and large quantities of popcorn. Daley was called "PeeWee" as soon as I got to be taller than him. That was a great day for me. It meant that I no longer had to ride stretched out horizontally behind the seat of the Model T. Usually Don drove; Swanson and Berhow sat in front, with me lying on the ledge above the seat. Bradish, Daley, and Thiel all sat on the trunk and locked arms, pushing against the spare tire to keep from falling off the car as Payer curved around Lake LaVerne. In cold weather the trio sat inside the trunk with their legs sticking out. Payer, always talking about what he was going to do as soon as the war was over, was dubbed by me as "PostWar" Payer.

Places Where I Spent My Time

Many evenings we went to the basement of the YMCA and played pool in the dark room in the basement. That very old man at the counter used a rubber stamp clock that marked our beginning and ending time. This determined the amount we owed for playing. Big chairs lined the walls where we sat waiting our turn to shoot. Chiding and unnerving the others was a key to our success in winning. Usually I excelled in the "slop shot" where I just closed my eyes and shot hard, hoping something would go in. Berhow tried to look cool with his careful alignment and studied determination. Bradish was luckier than anyone with his shots. We usually topped off each evening with a large bag of popcorn from the stand on the west side of Welch Avenue, up the street from the bus stop at the cigar store on the corner.

Other times we would go to the "Lump-Way", the L-Way Cafe on Lincoln Way, which was owned by Dres' uncle, and watch John demolish several hamburgers, all with onions on them. When the weather got really cold, we went to Brookside Park and skated up and down Squaw Creek. A big fire on the bank was supposed to keep us warm, but we did not stay around it much. My weak ankles caused my skates to fold inward until they nearly touched the ice. Berhow and Payer usually skated the best, as they went upstream skating around the logs and branches sticking up through the ice. I usually sat on the bank resting my weak ankles.

The games we played in the Bradish house on Lincoln Way were the most fun. Monopoly and other board games were nearly worn out. Then we chipped in and bought the game High Finance which was similar to Monopoly. We always popped a dishpan full of popcorn when we were at either my house or John's. Today I go by the place and it is so run down that it is unsightly.

One Christmas season we all went into the basement of the Western Auto Store and took toys off the shelves and played with them. That was the only time I was ever down there. I recall a race car that ran when you pulled on a curled rod in the rear of the car. We had races down there, with winners of heats advancing to the finals. The Western Auto Store was a common meeting place. Roy and Mrs. Payer were usually working in the back behind the partition. The partition never stopped us, as we usually went back there, too, to talk with them.

Basketball was played sometimes at the hoop on the garage at the Wilson Avenue house, which I think was owned by the Brouhards who operated the Pantorium Cleaners on Douglas. The Payers lived upstairs. We chose up sides and played several times there.

Golf was the vogue in the spring. Payer was the most dedicated to the sport, but we all tried. I played with donated clubs from neighbors. My only good club was a nine iron that I bought from Ray Kinchelo for 75 cents. We gathered up all the balls we needed from the Iowa State golf course, but we usually played at Homewood. I recall that the only wood that I had was a left-handed club. I tried to use it left-handed, but it didn't work. Then I switched to right-handed, hitting the ball off the rounded part. That was wild. Sometimes the ball would go nearly straight up. Once at Homewood I made everyone in the clubhouse duck as my ball headed right for the clubhouse from the #1 tee. I shook squirrels loose from the tree that shaded it.

Most of us took dancing lessons from two girls who rented the upstairs of the J. C. Penney Store. We entered by climbing a long metal outside stairs on the west side. Inside was a bare floor and a windup phonograph. A couple of other girls helped conduct the 50-cent lessons. I think I had about three of them but not enough to overcome my normal embarrassment about girls. Berhow usually did the best, leaving the impression that he was a real "operator."

While I was at Don's 60th birthday party, I listened to some comments from his priest. He said, "The hometown Don is always talking about doesn't exist any more." Then I thought back to those times when we were in high school. We did not have the problems that the kids today face. To my knowledge none of us ever drank anything alcoholic while we were in high school. None of us smoked. I bought my first package of cigarettes when I left for the Army. I was so shy by this time that I never had a real date. I did not take rejection well and I was afraid that if I asked for a date, I would be turned down. The girls seemed to have a strong desire to stay home and wash their hair, whenever I did get the courage mustered to actually ask one out. I would go to some of the sock hops that were held in the study hall after school, but I never had the nerve to actually ask a girl to dance. To give you some idea of how bad it actually was, Dick Berhow was my "date" for the senior prom night. We led a pretty wholesome life, and I really enjoyed doing it.

Our group started breaking up when we graduated, and Daley was left behind in school. He was one year younger than the rest of us. It seems odd to realize that he was the first of our group to die. Swanson and Payer went into the Navy. Bradish, Berhow, Thiel and I decided to enlist in the Army. Yes, I do agree with Don's priest that the hometown that Payer and the rest of us came from does not physically exist anymore. Ames is still there but it has changed a great deal; it has grown up, too. The Ames that still lingers in my mind is so real in my mind, even today. Those days were wonderful, and my friends were the best.

Chapter Nine

The Army Years (Part One)

Fort Snelling

Upon graduation from high school in 1946, I enlisted in the Army. The big inducement was not the patriotism, but the promise of a college education on the G. I. Bill. An enlistment of 18 months service provided the person with 3 years of college; a two-year enlistment provided 4 years of college. I had decided to enlist for the 4 years of college. The actual signup took place at the post office in Ames. Berhow, Bradish, Thiel and I went to the post office together and intended to sign up at the same time. After some discussion with the enlistment officer, I signed the papers for the two year enlistment, expecting my friends to sign up, too. Wrong! The officer determined that Dres Thiel was not old enough yet, so he decided to wait. The others decided to wait with him. This left me as the lone enlistee.

When I received my orders to report for duty to Fort Snelling, Minnesota, the other three came down to the bus depot to see me off. I stopped at the Osco Drug on Main Street to buy my first package of Old Gold cigarettes, now that I was old enough to smoke. In my mind it was a signal of maturity. As the bus pulled out from the Sheldon-Munn Hotel, I waved goodbye to my friends from the back seat of the bus. Then I opened my new pack of cigarettes and lit up. What a coughing fit I had! I was determined that this experience would be fun, so I puffed, coughed, puffed, coughed, and puffed again until I could blow smoke with the best of them. By the time I arrived at Fort Snelling, I believed that I was a very mature person. Now that I was away from home, I was "big stuff" and could do anything that I wanted to.

I was sent through the supply room, where the sergeant looked me over and tossed a bunch of clothes on the counter. He asked my shoe size and yelled to the soldier next to him to toss up a pair of Army boots. The last item in line was a duffle bag to hold all of the new issue clothing. After stuffing everything into the bag, I "fell in," which is an Army term meaning "line up and shut up." We marched to an empty barracks, a two-story frame structure with two small private rooms at one end of the ground floor. The toilets were located on the opposite end. A set of wooden stairs allowed access to the second floor. I picked out my bunk, the top bunk about half way down one side of the ground floor. We deposited our duffle bags. Again, we were told to "fall in on the double." Then we were told to "double time" to another building to draw our issue of a mattress cover, which the regular army men called a "fart sack," a blanket, sheets, and a pillow case. Then we "double-timed" back to our barracks and found our bunks. The mattresses were rolled up on all bunks, so the first act was to unroll the mattress and put a cloth sack over it. We were given instructions on how to make a bed the ARMY WAY. This called for the blanket to be folded over the mattress, tucked in a special way, and drawn under tightly. When I was finished, it must be possible to toss a quarter on the bed and have it bounce. If we did not make our beds tight enough, the corporal would jerk all of our bedding off the bed, and we would have to start all over again.

My personal items and most of the clothing were folded up a special way and put into a metal locker at the foot of the bed. This was called a foot locker. We had to consult a drawing on the bulletin board outside of the latrine, the toilet, to see how to fold the socks, the shirts, and everything. Each item had a special place in the drawer of the locker. A sergeant and a corporal were in charge of each barracks. They occupied the two private rooms that we passed on our way into the building. These two men, both surly and slightly sadistic, were to control my life in the camp. They told us when to sleep, when to get up, when to march to the mess hall to eat, when to do calisthenics, and when to relax. There was little time for the latter.

Since we had to be processed into the Army, we had a lot of waiting to do. We marched to the medical building, where we were asked to remove all of our clothing and were then lined up inside the building. The line worked past doctors and orderlies, who inquired about our physical condition. I was tested for a hernia by coughing at the right time, and I was checked for hemorrhoids by turning around and bending over. There was no privacy at all. We were herded along to the eye chart. It seemed to me that no matter what letters anyone called out, the clerk indicated that we passed, stamped our papers, and moved us along.

Each of us was given a half-pint milk bottle and told to go to the latrine to fill it. These bottles were then labeled with our serial numbers and name. My serial number was RA17172640. This number appeared on all of my medical records and was eventually stamped on each item of clothing that I had been given. The next stop for me was the station where blood was drawn. An attendant poked a needle into my arm and I was handed a test tube. I was instructed to hold it under the biggest end of the needle. The blood slowly dripped off the needle into the test tube. When it was full, I called the attendant who pulled the needle and put a stopper in the test tube. My name and serial number were written on a label. I think I could have been deaf and still have passed the hearing test, which was very simple. As we worked our way along the line, an attendant spoke softly, "Move to the next room." If you moved, then they figured out that you could hear okay. I came out the other side of the building a soldier in good standing.

After the physical exam, we were told to take a shower and dress in our fatigues. The fatigues were dark green uniforms, which consisted of a large, floppy jacket with many pockets and a pair of pants with two side pockets instead of the usual pants pockets. This uniform was the most comfortable of all. A dark green cloth cap with a bill completed the attire. The color was called khaki, which was supposed to blend into the trees and grass.

Then we marched to another building where we were lined up for haircuts. I guess we could loosely call them haircuts. There were three barber chairs in a room with an attendant behind each. I doubt if they were ever barbers. Each held a pair of clippers in one hand. We would sit, have a khaki sheet wrapped around our necks, and then the "barber" would run the shears from back to front and remove all hair. We came out the other end of the building nearly bald.

Shots were given a day or two later to those of us that passed the physicals. We removed our jackets, and walked down a line of attendants, each armed with needles. As we stopped at one station, an attendant on each side would give us a shot. Then we moved to the next station where we were given another pair of shots. We then doubled back, put on our jackets, and moved outside to wait for the others. I did not like the shots, but I was most surprised at the number of big, husky guys that fainted or got "woozy." After the last of our shots, we were "double-timed" to an area where we did calisthenics again. We were told by those in charge that they were doing us a favor, as pushups would keep our sore arms from getting stiff. I didn't believe them, but I learned to do the pushups and shut up.

While we were doing our processing, we had several days without much to do. We would go in the morning for some examination, and then we would be assigned some task in the afternoons. We had exercise each morning, each evening, and other times if we messed up too much. On about the third day, we were marched to a building for our psychological exam. This consisted of sitting on one side of a table across from a "doctor" dressed in a white coat. Mine asked me several questions. One was "Do you like girls?" Another was "Do you get along with your mother?" I didn't know how to answer the one about girls. I thought that I'd like to like girls, but I was so painfully shy that I never really got to know one very well. Then we were shown some ink blots and asked to describe what we saw in them. That about completed our testing.

I recall going into one room another day and was asked to put on headphones. I heard many noises which sounded like the Morse Code we worked with when I was a Boy Scout. We were told that certain sounds were different letters and then were given pencil and paper and told to write down what we heard. We had to learn only about eight different letters. These sounds then were given, first slowly, then faster and faster. I wrote carefully in the beginning and really tried, but when they came so fast, I just gave up and laid the pencil down. It was ridiculous, as far as I was concerned. In later life, I watched many comedy shows, like I Love Lucy, where people were speed challenged on an assembly line until there was a real mess. I felt just like that when I quit. This never caused me any problems with the Army, though. I suspect they did not really care what we did; it was just an exercise to keep us busy.

One day I will never forget we were taken to an area where there were wheelbarrows, shovels, and piles of sand. I was given a wheelbarrow and shovel. Then I was taken to a big pile of sand. The sergeant told me that I was to move the pile of sand to the other side of the area. I watched the other guys just "mosey"

along so slowly, shoveling for a while, then stopping for a while. I figured that they were really poor workers. I would hurry up and move my pile of sand to the other side, and then I could take a break under the shade trees, while they were still working along in the sun. I shoveled until the wheelbarrow was full, then moved it quickly to the other side, dumped it, and returned to my pile and shovel. It took me about 12 or 15 trips to move my whole pile. Then I parked my wheelbarrow and put the shovel in it. I walked over to the shade tree, slumped down against it, and lit a cigarette. As I was blowing the smoke, I thought how stupid the other guys were. If they had hurried, they could be relaxing with me. What a mistake! The sergeant spotted me under the tree and hurried over to me, yelling all the way.

"What in the Hell do you think you are doing?"

I calmly told him that I had finished my pile and I was taking a break. He told me to put out the cigarette and follow him. Back to my wheelbarrow we went. He told me that I was to now move my pile back to the first location. I finally caught on. I never did get the whole pile returned. The idea was just to keep us occupied. I quickly learned that there was no place in the Army for an "eager beaver."

I stayed in Fort Snelling for about two weeks. Each day was about the same. In the evenings we played cards, smoked, or just sat around and talked. All of the guys in my barracks were new people to me. But all were "in about the same boat." We had just graduated from high school. I recall meeting a guy from Scranton, Iowa, with whom I teamed up. I don't recall his name, and I never saw him again after Fort Snelling.

On one weekend we were given a two-day pass. We were allowed to go into St. Paul or Minneapolis, but we couldn't leave the state. I couldn't really go anywhere because I did not have much money. I went by bus into Minneapolis. There wasn't much for me to do except walk the streets and look for something fun to do. I didn't drink yet, so bars provided no interest to me. I went to a movie, ate in a restaurant, and walked and walked all over town. I spent the night, probably Saturday night, in a cheap hotel with the guy from Scranton. The next day we walked and looked at everything. We went back to the bus depot and took the first bus back to the base about 5 p.m. So much for my first pass.

After all of our papers had been completed, and after all of the testing was completed, we were told to prepare to ship out to basic training. A list by the latrine told each of us our new assignments. I searched the list to find Nass, Martin E. - RA 17172640 - Fort Knox - Artillery. This told me that I was being assigned to the artillery which sounded exciting to me. I packed all of my gear in my duffle bag and reported to the correct place where I waited with other recruits for a bus. We waited for several hours. Finally, a sergeant with a clipboard came out of a building and called us to order. As we sat on the ground, he called our names. We were expected to reply with our serial numbers. If a recruit did not respond quickly enough, he was told to stand and wait until the others had been processed. My name was midway down the list, so I practiced and practiced until I had memorized my number. To this day, I have not forgotten it.

I boarded the bus I was assigned to. Then we departed. Where was I going? Where was Fort Knox? What was the artillery like? I didn't know what to expect, but I was hopeful that I could fit in. The bus took us to the train depot, where we were again told to sit as our names were called. Again, I responded with my serial number. Finally we boarded day cars on the train. I took a seat facing the direction of the train engine, figuring that the train would be going that way. The train was a very slow train. We were pulled off the main line many times to let fast passenger trains pass us. Sack lunches were provided for two meals. I had no idea where we were at any time. It seemed odd to me to be riding through a small town, watching the local people waiting in cars or on foot for the train to pass. I waved at them; they usually waved back.

At nearly sundown, we came into a large city. The train slowed, stopped, moved ahead again, and finally stopped. We all shuffled around, got up, stretched, and looked around. We were eager to get off the train, if only for a short time. Finally a sergeant came into the car and yelled for us to be quiet. He told us that we would be stopping for about an hour. We would be fed a hot meal and then have some time to walk around, but we must be back in our cars ready to leave in exactly one hour. We hurried off the train and

lined up with the others for our hot meal. We sat anywhere we could as we gulped down the meal, the first hot meal in about 10 hours. After cleaning our metal trays in garbage cans of hot water, we stacked them in a pile on a table and were free for the rest of the hour. I didn't want to get far away because I was afraid of missing the train.

I walked into the depot and asked a man where I was. He told me we were in St. Louis. I had never been out of Iowa before I went to Fort Snelling, so I now figured that I was a real traveler. Iowa, Minnesota, and now Missouri.

I walked to the nearest door of the depot and stepped outside. I looked around at the tall buildings, at the traffic, and at the people coming and going. My eye caught a tall building on the hill about two blocks east of the depot. It looked interesting. As I looked at the building and speculated on what it might be, I had the oddest feeling come over me. I felt like I had been in that building before. Yet, I had never been out of the state before. The feeling got stronger and stronger. I could just visualize the front side of the building. It had three very tall doors and some huge columns of stone. There would be many steps up to the doors. The longer I stood there the stronger the feeling became. Finally, I could not stand there any longer. I just had to see the other side of the building. Checking my time, I hurried across the street and up the hill. When I got to the front of the building it was exactly as I had pictured it. How could this be? What was happening to me? This was very weird and I felt a bit uneasy. I walked back and forth in front of the building looking at it from all sides. Then I crossed the street and looked back at the doors. I felt that I was certain that I had been in that building, but I knew that I could not have been there before. I stood and wondered about it all for many minutes.

Finally, I walked back to the depot and re-boarded the train. I sat very quietly as the other guys returned to the train. I never did figure out how I could possibly have had such a strong feeling, and, to this day, I still cannot. As I have mentioned this experience to others, they have suggested that maybe I had seen a picture of the building somewhere. I know that I had not. It is something that has never happened to me again, but on occasion, my mind goes back to the troop train that pulled into the St. Louis depot so that the recruits could eat a hot meal on the platform.

Basic Training

I finally arrived in Fort Knox, Kentucky, for my basic training. It was an artillery post, so I soon learned about 105 howitzers. The shells that they fired came in two pieces. The projectile was removed, and about nine bags of gun powder were connected together with a string. Decreasing in size, the largest bag was at the bottom. The smallest bag was on top. The classes we had taught us to open the shell, tear out the required number of bags of powder, and reinsert the projectile in the shell casing. Quickly, I learned that you do NOT bounce a shell on the ground if the projectile gets started in crooked. The primer is located on the bottom. It could fire, blowing up the guy trying to straighten out the shell. This shell was then pushed into the howitzer by the number three man. The number one man pulled the lanyard to fire the gun; the number two man sighted the aiming device and controlled the elevation as well. The third and fourth man opened the shell and set the correct number of charges. I think there were about two others, who hauled in new projectiles and disposed of the old ones.

The gun had to be set up first. This required opening the trails after disconnecting the howitzer from the jeep or 3/4 ton truck. The trails had "spades" on the ends which we dug into the ground. If the trails were not "dug in," the entire howitzer would move backward when fired, killing or severely injuring the crew. After we all learned how to operate the gun, we switched positions and practiced the aiming and firing tasks. One time I screwed up, as all recruits did at some time. I can't recall exactly what it was, but the sergeant deemed it sufficiently wrong to require punishment. I had to carry a shell, which weighed 39 pounds, over my head as I ran around the drill field. The drill field was larger than a football field. It got so heavy that I stopped and lowered the shell to catch my breath. The sergeant yelled at me to keep moving. When I got back, I fell to the ground exhausted. Needless to say, I never again messed up during howitzer practice.

Kitchen Police at Fort Knox

While I was in basic training, it fell to my lot to have K. P. duty. K. P. stands for kitchen police. This meant that we had to tie a towel to the foot of our bunks in the barracks. At about 4:00 a.m. the orderly came through the barracks and woke up the people whose bunks had a towel. We dressed in the dark and "fell in" outside. The orderly then ordered us to do double time to the mess hall. The other guys all hated this duty, but I actually enjoyed doing it once in a while. We had to wash the tables, help set out the food for the mess line, and fill the pans with the food. I recall opening many, many tins of peaches and pouring them into a large stainless steel bowl. We had good scrambled eggs, bacon, toast, and fruit. Sometimes we had oatmeal, too. I thought the food was good. We hurried around to get things ready for breakfast.

After breakfast we had to clean up everything. The trays had to be scalded and put in racks to dry. The extra food was put into huge refrigerators. Then instead of resting until noon, I was put to work peeling potatoes. At Fort Knox, we did have a potato peeler. It was a large bowl which rotated at an angle like a small cement mixer. The interior was coated with a rough surface which really skinned the potatoes. Then all I had to do was take a knife and dig out the eyes and blemishes.

What I liked best about doing K. P. was after most of the work was done for the next meal. We were allowed into the refrigerator to take anything we wanted to eat. I had steak and eggs for breakfast, drank lots of milk, and enjoyed other things in quantity. It seemed that I was always hungry, so this was a good time for me to fill up.

One duty that we detested when on K. P. was cleaning the grease trap. It fell to the one poor soul that the mess sergeant felt like picking on. I knew what a mess it was, so I tried to stay on good terms with all of the cooks. To my recollection, I was assigned the task only once. I had to climb down into what seemed like a small well. All sewage drained through this tank first. The cool water solidified the grease, which collected on the top. The poor bloke that had the clean out duty had to take a huge ladle and pick out all of the grease. It smelled to "high heaven."

One comment about the towels on the bunks. I recall one time, when some of the guys were out late and returned after lights out, they switched the towels. When the orderly came through the next morning, all hell broke loose as the people not assigned to K. P. were awakened by mistake. There was much yelling, swearing, and general confusion.

Each night when it was time for the evening meal, we were dismissed and we ran as hard as we could to get to the front of the chow line. Usually I fell far behind. This time, for some reason, I was leading the pack. As I neared the hall, I turned my head to see how far back the next guy was. Since I was not watching where I was running, I ran into a row of posts that were connected with wire. This dumped me over the wire and down into the ditch. The others ran past me laughing at my stupidity. I realized, as I lay in the ditch, that I had dislocated my left knee. I got it back in joint and hobbled along the path to the line. That evening, as I limped around on my swollen knee, I debated going to the sick bay the next morning. I figured that if I went to the doctor, I might be put in the hospital, have a cast put on it, or some such thing. That might make me fall behind in my eight-week training, and I would be held over until the next class. It is funny now, but I felt that my friends were important to me and I didn't want to leave them. I decided to limp along as best I could. I did manage to continue with the rigorous training and graduate on time. This knee would continue to bother me the rest of my life.

Heading Overseas

At the end of my basic training of eight weeks, I was graduated, given a one-week leave, and given orders to report to Oakland, California. I was being assigned to Occupation duty in Japan. I took the train to Ames, where I caught a city bus to the college area where I lived. I had not told my parents that I was coming home. They gave me a hero's welcome. After all, I had been gone for about ten weeks. I wore my uniform and, I'm sure, looked every bit a rookie. After a week of visiting around Ames in my uniform, I caught a steam-driven engine from the Ames depot which took five days to get to Oakland. It was a local

train, which meant that we got sidetracked for nearly every train we met. The windows were not tight, so the soot from the engine drifted in freely. I slept sitting up in a day coach. Whenever I woke up, usually to shift position to get rid of a very stiff neck, I had to stand and dust off my uniform. Imagine riding for five days in a smoke-filled coach while wearing the same clothes all that time. My baggage, except for a "dop kit" which held my toothbrush, shaving gear, and soap, was checked through to Oakland.

I have always been a worry wart. The Army warned us that if we showed up at the Oakland post without our duffle bags, we would have to buy all new equipment and clothes. I believed them. What if my bag got set off accidentally. How could I pay? I checked each time the train stopped to make sure that my bag was not tossed on the Railway Express carts. When I arrived in Oakland, we were met by a very gruff sergeant who yelled for us to assemble on the platform. We were to go to the depot and get our bags. Fortunately, mine was present. What a relief! Imagine worrying for five days that it would get lost. I have since learned the hard way much of what we worry about will not come to pass.

Luggage for about four or five guys had not arrived. The sergeant simply told them that when we got off the Army bus that would take us to the base, they should report to the supply room and draw all new clothing and equipment. Imagine. I could have thrown away mine in Ames and picked up all new in California.

Here we received another battery of shots, sometimes four at a time, two to each arm. We packed and drilled and repacked until it was time for us to get ready to sail. We were bussed to the dock at Oakland, loaded onto a river steamboat that was chartered for duty in the harbor, and taken to our ship for boarding. I was going as far away from home as I would ever get. Here I was, a kid just out of high school, boarding a ship to cross the Pacific Ocean. I had never been out of the state of Iowa before. We boarded a ferry boat to take us across the bay to the docks. Here I boarded the S. S. Costa Rica victory ship that was to be my home for the next thirteen days. I was seasick for the entire trip. I have told my friends that I travelled to Japan "by rail" since I spent much of my time throwing up. It was then that I decided that the two worst things a guy could have at the same time was seasickness and lockjaw.

My First Ocean Voyage on a Troop Ship

The ship was the SS Costa Rica victory ship. Compared with the other ocean-going liners, ours was just a small ship that was battered about by the seas for the 13 days it took us to get to Yokohama, Japan. I got so seasick that at times I did not care where we were going. The bunks were fastened to poles between floor and ceiling. There were five bunks on each side of the pole. I did not know the person who slept on the other side of the pole. The only person that I knew in the entire bay was on the second from the top bunk. I was second from the bottom.

Large garbage cans were located beside the stairways ("ladders" to the nautical people) into which we could throw up. It was impossible to get to the deck in time to throw up over the railing. Some poor guys had to haul in new garbage cans and take the old ones up on deck and toss the contents over the fantail. What a lousy job!

I was so sick that I could not eat for the first five days. Finally, my friend got me a small box of Cheese It crackers and a cup of coffee. This eventually stayed down. I took my mess kit and went on deck when I got ready to try to eat real food. I stood in a line that wound around the deck. I waited about three hours for the chow line to open. When I got within range, I held out my mess kit. Some face with very hairy arms threw some food into the kit and motioned for me to dip some coffee out of the big pot.

Our dining room was somewhat of a joke. There were floor to ceiling poles like we had in the bunk area. This time a metal table was fastened to the poles to form a table. We had to eat standing up. I put my mess kit down on the table and searched in my fatigue uniform pocket for the knife, fork, and spoon that I had removed from my mess kit. Finally, I would have some hot food. I hoped that I could get it down and then keep it down.

Just as I was ready to dig in, the ship rolled (or pitched) and my mess kit slid away from me and stopped in front of the guy standing next to me. At just that moment, he threw up, hitting my mess kit. That wiped me out completely. I put the mess kit together and headed for the deck fast before I lost it myself. I really could not blame the guy, because I knew exactly how he felt.

Another day, when I was ready to try food again, I opened my mess kit to discover that I had not cleaned it up yet. What a mess! I gagged as I ran to the area where they had huge garbage cans of scalding water. I dunked my kit up and down until it got fairly clean. The first can held soapy water, the next two, clean water. Then I went back to the end of the line and waited for about another hour to get some food. This time, I held onto my mess kit all of the time. No more sliding down in front of another sick person.

After about a week, I was beginning to take nourishment. The sergeant then assigned me to K. P. duty. When I reported to the kitchen, probably called the "galley" on board ship, I still felt weak in the knees and my stomach was a bit "queasy." My assignment on the food line was at a 20-gallon pan which held canned peaches. I was given a long-handled ladle. I was to ladle out the peaches onto the metal trays of the soldiers as they passed along. The hot, steamy galley and the motion of the ship made me suddenly become very sick. Just as the line of soldiers passed by me, I threw up into the peaches. One of the sergeants yelled at me. At the same time, about a dozen of the soldiers who had seen what had happened started throwing up, too. What a mess it was. The sergeant called for a couple of the other K.P.'s to haul the huge vat of peaches to the garbage rail, a hole in the side of the ship where I now kneeled. I was immediately relieved from duty.

Another time, probably about the third day out of the harbor, I stood up in the head (bathroom). It was located in front of the ship. The area consisted of about 12 stools, all connected to one large pipe. The water from the ocean flushed through the pipe and carried everything out to sea. The flushing action came from the drastic rise and fall of the ship. You can imagine the surprise to me, as I sat there doing my thing, to have the ship suddenly drop about 12 to 15 feet. The rush of the water was preceded by a rush of cold air that felt as though it would lift me off the stool. Then came the rush of cold ocean water that splashed on my bottom.

There were showers in the same area. This water was ocean water and it was not heated. We were each given a bar of salt-water soap which had the appearance of a bar of oatmeal. It never did lather up. The cold showers kept the lines moving rapidly, as we struggled to get clean.

When I returned to the sleeping bay, I got ready to climb back into my canvas bunk. I stopped to say hello to my friend first. As I was talking with Hoskins, the guy on the top bunk moaned, rolled over to the edge of the bunk, and threw up on me. Another mess! Back to the showers with my oatmeal bar!

I told my friends back home about my experiences and ended up saying that I travelled all of the way to Japan by "rail." Much of the time I was on deck throwing up over the rail. There were hundreds of us doing the same thing.

Finally, I heard shouts of sighting of land. We all rushed to the deck and craned our necks for a good look at Japan. Since Japan had just been occupied by our country, I imagined that I would have to travel about carrying my rifle or a handgun to protect myself. After landing, we boarded a train for Nagoya. I purchased a small English-Japanese dictionary, which I consulted as we waited on the train for all to board. I opened the window and watched the Japanese railroad crews doing their work. I looked up "Good Morning" and translated it into "Ohio-Gozymus." I practiced yelling that out the window with little luck. I changed the pronunciation and tried several times. When I finally made someone understand me, he replied back "It is now afternoon. Try Kohn-neechei-wah." This I found out means "Good Afternoon."

My Occupation Duty in Japan

I had no idea what to expect when I arrived in Japan in August, 1946. It seemed to me that since we had been in such a bitter war with the Japanese since Pearl Harbor Day, 1941, that I would have to be very

careful and carry a loaded gun with me at all times. Fortunately, I found that conditions were not like that at all.

When I arrived in Yokohama, Japan, it was early morning. We had packed our duffle bags and formed long lines on deck as the ship was tied to the dock. When the gangplank was lowered, we marched off the ship and onto stable land. What a relief after all the bouncing around on the waves the past 13 days! Now, the seasickness would end. We were loaded into buses and were taken to what the army called a Replacement Depot outside of Yokohama. The G. I.'s all called it the Repple Depple. We finally got into a nice hot shower, got haircuts, laid out all of the contents of our duffle bags on a blanket, and stood inspection. Much contraband was confiscated by the sergeant. I can't imagine all that was carried away. How had it all gotten on board ship?

We drilled, exercised, and worked at time-consuming tasks until our orders were prepared. I read the bulletin board where the names of the guys in my barracks were posted. I did not know one single soul in the entire barracks. I read that I was to be assigned to Tokai-Hokariko Military Government in Nagoya, Japan. At the indicated time, we were loaded into brown Army buses and driven to the railway depot along with about a dozen other guys. I was put on board a train to Nagoya. I had no idea where I was going and what I was going to be doing. I figured that I would be assigned to guard the Japanese people to keep them from attacking us.

Instead, we were met at the Nagoya depot by an officer. We were lined up, counted off, and then we answered when our names were called. Then I was told that I would be assigned to Public Health and was to report to Dr. Phillip something. We were loaded into the back of a "6-by" which is what the Army called the 6 wheel trucks which were rated at a ton and a half. The "6-by" designation stood for 6 X 6 which meant that all six wheels were drive wheels. Later, I would use a 3/4 ton truck which was a lot easier to get into and out of. These "6 by" trucks were GMC trucks with a heavy tailgate. Most of the time the drivers were lazy and did not want to get out to lower the tailgate, so we had to climb in and then jump out after tossing our barracks bags out first.

We were driven around for a long time. From the back of the truck, I watched Japanese people, the old cars, ancient trucks, and saw some bomb damage, too. Nagoya had received only one bomb run by B29's. This caused a great deal of damage in the industrial area and the railroad yards. I wondered about the people. They were everywhere. How could we possibly guard them when there were so few of us?

The truck pulled up to the nice building that had a pool in front and a covered driveway at the front door. A tall wall surrounded the buildings. This, I learned was to be my home for the next two years. The motor pool was on the south side of the pool area. The living quarters were on the north. By now the truck load of guys had dwindled to only three. The others had been dropped off at other locations, as we traveled through the city. The truck pulled into the motor pool garages. I was home.

Inside, I stopped at an office area and showed my papers to the orderly. I was taken to a room on the second floor and assigned to a bunk. Then I was sent to the supply room to draw blankets, sheets, and some more clothing. We ate on the ground floor in a dining area. A kitchen was located to the north of the dining area. Offices filled the south (front end) of the building. The building had an elevator which ran between the basement (supply room and barber shop) and the third floor. This floor was a penthouse type floor. There were a few rooms, but most of the north end was a recreation area. Here we played cards, ping pong, and ordered food and drinks from the bar. Off to one side was an open area that had tables, which we sometimes used when the weather was nice. It was what we might call a terrace. About 50 G. I.'s were housed in this building, all of us assigned to Military Government. A small closet had been converted to serve as a PX. Here, one hour after supper each evening, we could buy cigarettes, film, candy, and other small items. Lucky Strike cigarettes were available for \$1.00 a carton.

After I was there for about three months, I was informed that I could check out a jeep from the motor pool to drive anywhere in the area. I had to supply the money for the gas, which cost 10 cents a gallon. What a bargain! And, we had a Japanese driver assigned to us. We had a Japanese barber that gave haircuts and

shaves for small amounts of money. The first time the barber moved the straight edge razor across my neck, I hoped that he harbored no bad feeling for me.

Military Government

My assignment was in the Tokai-Hokariko Military Government organization that was housed in another nice building about a mile away. Trucks carried us back and forth to the quarters, so we did not have to walk. I figured that I would be spending my time in Occupation by marching with a rifle on my shoulder, gas mask at my side, and canteens on my belt. Instead, I was driven back and forth to work.

The organization of the Military Government was an overall office called Tokai-Hokariko which governed six prefectures. I don't recall the names of all of them now. There were two in the north part of the main island, Honshu. They were Toyama and Ishikawa. Mie was a prefecture close to Nagoya. The prefectures were similar to our states. In the main office, there were about five different divisions, each of which had a counterpart in the various prefectures. My assignment was in Public Health. A doctor, who was a Captain from Indiana, was my immediate superior. I was the only other person in the office. I was responsible for tracking the diseases such as typhus, typhoid fever, smallpox, and such on an overlay map on one wall of the office. I typed all reports that went up to I Corps and down to the prefectures. We also had the task of distributing the medicines and dusting powder to the Japanese, as they tried to control the diseases. This was done through the Red Cross and with the local Japanese officials in each town.

I liked my work. It was different all the time. At first I had to spend a lot of time typing reports to be sent up to "I Corps," our immediate supervisors. We pronounced it "eye-Corps" but it stood for the Roman numeral I. After about four weeks of typing, the Captain decided to make a change. My typing, which I hated, came to a halt when a Japanese lady was hired to be my typist. Her name was Utako Nakagawa. She spoke very good English and could type so much better than I.

I was then assigned to other duties like inspecting slaughter houses, checking damage to sewage systems caused by our bombing, and meeting with the Red Cross and Japanese officials to arrange for the proper transfer of medicines. I began to spend a great deal of time in the countryside traveling to all seven prefectures. Many times I had to stay overnight. Usually, I was assigned a jeep and a Japanese driver. This kept me from getting lost in the beginning. Whenever I was on duty, it was required that I always had a driver. On weekends, I could arrange to check out a jeep and drive myself on excursions.

Inspections of Slaughter Houses and Hospitals

This freed me up to go out into the prefectures to inspect slaughter houses, water systems, sanitation systems, and hospitals. For each, I studied a book provided by the Army which told me all that I would need to know about each. I felt inadequate as I went to some town to meet with the officials about the town water system. All that I knew came out of a small booklet. Since there was bomb damage in some of the prefectures and in Nagoya, a large portion of the water systems were affected. It was our responsibility to determine what was necessary to bring them up to a standard. I made reports which went up through channels but were never heard about again. I presume that money and/or supplies were made available for the Japanese to repair them.

The slaughter houses were the hardest for me to understand. One rule was that all meat had to be inspected and had to have come from a live animal in the slaughter house. The Japanese had a real shortage of meats and were eager to bend the rules to get meat. At one slaughter house, I found that a horse which died while pulling a cart was loaded onto the cart and carried to the slaughter house's back door. The staff then dragged the animal inside, strung it up, swung a large hammer at its head to "kill it" and then proceeded to butcher it. I knew that this animal was dead when it arrived, but the long line of housewives standing outside with pails waiting for the meat caused me to look the other way. Otherwise, it would have been necessary to condemn the animal and have the slaughter house bury the horse somewhere. I knew that if I insisted upon burial, it would be dug up again and distributed as soon as I left.

Another area for me to check were the hospitals. I was accustomed to Mary Greeley Hospital in Ames and expected all hospitals to look like that. I was not prepared for the cold rooms with many hard wooden tables lined up along the walls. The windows were propped open as our carnival booths. Most rooms had no screens. The patients were lying on the tables with blankets covering them. Someone related to each patient was usually living in the room, sleeping on the floor beside the patient. These family members cooked the food on charcoal burners right in the room. What a dismal place! I had to check the sanitation, inspect the patient records, check the storage of the medicines, and examine the other rooms in the hospital. I always felt bad when I left a hospital. I imagine that many patients did not survive the experience.

I pondered how it came to pass that "A Kid From Ames" would be making judgements about whether a certain slaughter house could process and sell a horse that died on the road, or whether a certain hospital passed the sanitation requirements. I was able to pass along the much needed medicine to help the Japanese with the typhus, typhoid fever, and other diseases. Perhaps I did some good.

One time during my two years' duty, I had to enter the hospital when I became ill. Fortunately it was an Army hospital and was clean, cheerfully staffed, and had recreational facilities for my use as I convalesced.

Mikimoto and the Pearl Factory

One of the most memorable trips that I took was with my Captain. We checked out a jeep and loaded it with penicillin, sulfa, and other drugs. He drove to a seaside town where Mikimoto lived. I had not heard of Mikimoto before, but he was the man who developed the cultured pearl industry in Japan. He was very old and very sick. He needed some drugs that he could not get from Japanese sources, so the Captain took him what he needed. We were both ushered into his bedroom where he was lying on a mat on the floor. An interpreter assisted with the conversation. After the brief visit, we were taken to special rooms where we were to spend the night. The Captain, of course, had a nice large room. Mine was certainly adequate. Then we were asked to join a group for a very fine Japanese dinner of sukiyaki, octopus, sea weed soup, and many dishes whose contents were unknown to me. We were served many cups of hot sake, a rice wine.

The next morning, we were taken on a tour of the pearl factory. The bay was dotted with young Japanese girls, each with a floating wooden bucket. We were told that the girls had developed tremendous lung capacity and could stay under water for long periods of time. They dove down and scooped up oysters, which had previously been implanted with a piece of sand as an irritant. These were placed in special beds to be allowed to grow a pearl around the piece of sand. When it was harvest time, the girls brought them up and put them in the buckets. These were transferred to the factory building where they were opened up. The pearls were extracted and the oysters were shucked into a pail for eventual eating. To open the shell, it was necessary to cut the main muscle, which would not allow the oyster to continue living in the ocean.

The pearls then went into a complex grading scheme. They were separated by color. Some were almost black, some grey, some white, and some pink. Next they were graded by size. After all of the grading was completed, they were placed in trays. Small ones were at each end, and then gradually larger ones next, until it reached the center where the largest was placed. These were then drilled, strung, and connected to fasteners to make a necklace.

Other items were also made. Cuff links, earrings, pins, broaches, and other items were made with pearls. When the tour was completed, we were taken to a showroom. The interpreter told the Captain that Mikimoto was most grateful for the medicines and wanted each of us to have a string of pearls and a few loose pearls, too. The doctor was allowed to select his string from one counter; I was directed to a different counter for my selection. I imagine that since I was an enlisted man, it would be discourteous to the Captain to have his gift be the same value as mine. We were both delighted with our pearls. I saved mine for my sister, Gloria. I couldn't send the string home in the mail without a declaration of value.

When it was time for me to come home, I carried them on my person. At the Repple Depple we were told to lay out all of our belongings on our blanket for an inspection. A random search was done on individuals

where much booty was taken from the soldiers. Quickly I put my things away and went back to the barracks until the next day. I figured that my pearls might be stolen, so I opened a can of foot powder, dumped out half of the powder, put the string of pearls and the loose pearls inside, and then poured the rest of the powder back in the can. The next day, we were again inspected. This time I was prepared. The guy next to me had several things confiscated, but I was not bothered. I felt confident, and my pearls made it home to my sister.

R & R

After about a year in my job, I learned that I could apply for an R & R pass. This stood for Rest and Recreation. This was a five-day pass to go to a resort area in Ishakawa in northern Honshu. I boarded a train and traveled overnight. This area was a beautiful place in the mountains. The hotel had about four stories. The top floor was even with the ground; the rest of the hotel was built on the side of the mountain. The hotel ended at a small lake. I knew no one else but liked the idea of Rest and Relaxation. There were hot tubs to soak in, a lake to swim in, boating, hiking and eating. The food offered was wonderful.

One night I decided to go into Ishakawa with a couple of other guys. We hitched a ride in the back of a truck. The town had no visible damage. We wandered about looking at everything. When it was time to go back to the resort, we started hiking along the road. No traffic came by, and we knew that we would never get back home in the dark, so I went to a Japanese home and knocked on the door. The panel slid back, and the man and I conversed in sign language and some English and Japanese. He then offered us lodging in one room of his house for the rest of the night. We slept on mats on the floor, with what looked to me like bean bags for pillows. In the morning we thanked him and gave him some yen, which was Japanese money. I suspect that we gave him too much, as he bowed and bowed as he followed us out the gate to the road. We walked back to the resort.

Visit to the Inside of a Buddha

Much of the travelling that I did in Japan was by jeep. As my time in Japan came close to two years, I decided that I wanted to visit more of Japan. This was best done by rail. Japan had a very efficient system, and I was able to travel everywhere on Honshu. I never tried to get to Hokkaido, a northern island, or Kyushu, a southern island. If the travel was close, like the time I arranged to go to the big Buddha, I took a jeep. Since it took special permission to get inside the Buddha, I asked my secretary, Utako, to write letters asking for permission. She was able to arrange it for me. When I entered the darkened room at the rear of the Buddha, my guide let me wander around inside. There were many wooden boxes along the side of the huge room. I wondered if they are crypts with bodies inside. With sign language and broken phrases of Japanese and English, the guide understood and opened one of the boxes. I was relieved to find that the boxes contained clothing. I assumed that the clothing was special costumes for their religious ceremonies. When I was bent over looking at some feature, I jumped as a gong rang out. The priest began beating on the gong to call the people to worship. He locked the door and went to meet his people.

It was very strange to me how supplies are distributed in the Army. We had about a dozen jeeps at Tokai. Each had two headlights when I first arrived. Our supply sergeant simply could not get any replacement headlights. It soon was necessary to arrange for all jeeps to have at least one headlight. Finally, some of the jeeps had no headlights while a few others had one headlight. When I checked out a jeep, I had to ask for a day-time jeep or a night-time jeep. The day-time jeeps had no headlights, so we had to return before dark. After conversations with others who served in the Army, I learned that this was common for one place to be short some items that were overflowing somewhere else. Our supply sergeant used to take trips to other bases to barter for things that he needed.

I went to Japan as a Private. After a short time I was promoted to PFC, which stood for Private First Class. This gave me some more pay and my first "stripe." Then I was promoted to T/5, which stood for Technician 5th Class. This was equivalent to a Corporal and gave me two stripes as well as more pay.

Finally, I was promoted, at my Captain's request, to T/4. This stood for Technician 4th Class which was equivalent to a Sergeant. My Captain then recommended me for Staff Sergeant, but I left Japan while that request was in progress.

A Couple of Funny Remembrances

One other thing sticks in my mind about the headquarters building. A colonel was in charge of the operation. A major was second in command. Neither had a sense of humor. We were constantly cautioned not to waste paper. We were instructed to use both sides, the backside for scratch paper. The major had a bunch of signs printed up that said, "Conserve Paper, Use Both Sides." I took one of these signs down and put it in one of the stalls in the officers' bathroom. Naturally, it was determined that I had done the deed.

Another time, I observed the Japanese guard who wore thongs and sat at a desk by the front door. His job was to manage the sign-in book. He generally slipped out of his slippers and went throughout the building in his white slippers which fit like mittens. His big toe was in one part, the rest of his toes in the other. One time when he was gone, I got a hammer and some nails and nailed his thongs to the floor under his desk. I watched out of the corner of my eye at quitting time as he slipped his slippers into his thongs and struggled to get up. Not a very nice thing to do, but I laughed.

A Cormorant Festival

Another time, Utako arranged for me to go to a Cormorant Festival. I took three friends, and we went to a small town where we were met by what I figured was the local mayor. He took us to a feast where we were served sukiyaki, octopus, seaweed soup, pomegranates, and other foods that I had never tried before. Suki-yaki became a favorite of mine, but the octopus I could skip easily. It had the texture of celery, but when you bit down, it would spring back up again. You really had to gnaw on it to get a piece. After the fine dinner and some ceremonial saki (rice wine), we were taken to a covered area along the water front. It was dark by now and we saw brightly colored boats, covered with Japanese lanterns, drifting down the river toward us. All the while music was played. As the boats neared I saw that there were big birds, called cormorants, that had rings around their long slender necks. The rings had a chain attached which were fastened to the boats. The birds were tossed out on the water. They would then dive under the water and scoop up fish in their bills. Then the people on the boats would pull on the chains and get the birds back into the boat. They would then turn the birds upside down and gently stroke down their throats to get the birds to cough up the fish, which were caught in large baskets. Then the birds were placed back into the water.

It was a wonderful experience. We all enjoyed it very much. With much ceremony we left our hosts and got back into the truck. I was driving. As we worked our way back in the dark, we had a blowout on the truck. This truck was a 3/4 ton truck, so there were no dual wheels. We had to stop. I had never changed a tire. We were dressed in our best uniforms and didn't want to crawl around under the truck to get the spare. An old Japanese truck came along with two men in it. They could not pass us on the narrow road, so they stopped. By sign language I showed them our predicament. They agreed to change the tire for us. We got back into the truck and waited while they did all the work. When they were finishing up, I suggested that we pool our resources and give them some Japanese money, which is called yen. The four of us chipped in quite a bit of yen, which I gave to the driver of the Japanese truck. I offered it to him and said in my halting Japanese "Arigato" which is close to "Thank You." He was shocked, showed it to his friend, and bowed, bowed, and bowed again. We got back in our truck and returned to the base. The next day I related this to Utako and she asked me how much I gave them. When I told her, she too was shocked. She said that they probably worked for nearly a month to earn that much money. No wonder they bowed repeatedly!

Eventually, my two years of service expired and I was allowed to pack my belongings into my bag and take the train to Yokohama to be processed. I came back to the United States in 13 days aboard the S. S. LeRoy Eltinge, a troop transport that was larger than the victory ship on which I traveled to Japan. I was sick most

of the way back. I can really say that I traveled to and from Japan by rail. I hung over the rail when the motion got too bad.

Chapter Ten

My Family

Betsey Ann Nass

When I was one year old, my parents had a daughter that they named Betsey Ann. My earliest recollection of her is when we lived on Oak Street, a block south of the bus barn. I remember our playing together by the time I was four. Our Grandpa Nass was a carpenter and cabinet maker in Huxley. He made a round drop leaf table and two stools for me and my sister for my fourth birthday. Mother took a picture of Betsey and me wearing sailor suits at that table.

By the time I was five we moved again to the south side of 13th Street in Ames. This cinder street was the last street on the north side of Ames in those days. The south side had regular city mail delivery, while the north side had Rural Free Delivery, or RFD as we called it.

During the summer Betsey and I were playing horse in the yard west of our house. She was the cowboy and I was the horse. She tied a rope around my neck and led me around the yard. When she tied me to a tree I was supposed to graze. I got into the spirit of the game and began to eat grass. During that day I went all around chewing grass from the yard. Later, I came down with what Mother called the "... biggest mess you ever got into in your life." It was Trench Mouth. Mother had to boil all of my towels, clothing, and eating utensils. She had to swab the inside of my mouth with a foul tasting medicine, as I yowled and cried loudly between gags.

This house sat up on a small hill, so we had about 5 concrete steps in front to get down to the street level. Betsey and I were playing on the sidewalk between our porch and the top of the steps. She was learning to ride my tricycle and she went back and forth. One time she didn't stop in time and rode the tricycle down the steps and ended in a heap at the bottom, screaming her head off. I ran down the steps and checked the tricycle which looked okay to me. Then I carried it back up the steps and parked it beside the porch before I went inside to tell Mother that Betsey was hurt. Later Mother scolded me about not taking good care of my sister, but she was not seriously hurt.

One Sunday morning we started the activities to get ready to go to church. Mom started with me and got me all cleaned up and dressed. I was sent outside with the instructions to "Stay on the sidewalk and don't get yourself all dirty." Next she went to work on Betsey. She dressed her in a pretty dress with all frilly work on both sides. A big bow at the back finished the job. She looked nice as Mother sent her out to stay on the sidewalk with me, while she went to work on Gloria, my younger sister.

While we were standing there, a big kid (he must have been at least 7 or 8 years old) came from around the side of the house next door where he lived. He walked up to my sister, opened his trousers and wet all over her and the dress. We both ran inside to "tell." Mother couldn't believe it. She was very angry, so she ran out the front door and confronted the boy, who quickly ran away. Next she went to the neighbor and spoke to the boy's mother. As I waited outside again, I heard the cries of the boy as his mother paddled him, and I heard her yell, "Why in the world did you ever do such a naughty thing to her?"

Soon after we moved to West Street, when I was in third grade, I became aware that Betsey was sick. Doctors came to our house to examine her, and different treatments were tried. Mom moved her to the front bedroom and slept in there with her. She continued to get worse until it was decided to send her to Iowa City for further diagnosis and treatment. This was serious, as in those days you went to Iowa City only if it was really serious or you did not have any money. We qualified on both counts. The doctors there decided that she had a brain tumor and that surgery was necessary. They operated and removed the tumor, but Betsey went into a coma and never regained consciousness.

This was a particularly tough time for Mother and Dad. Dad had a janitor's job for which he was paid about \$90.00 a month, and we lived in a house that rented for \$14.00. Mother was ill a good deal of the time, but she tried to do washings and ironings for others when she could to help out. So, little money and other small kids to take care of presented major problems for them. Mother moved to Iowa City, where she arranged to stay in a small room in the basement of the hospital on a cot in return for working mornings in the laundry, repairing sheets, pillow cases, and other clothing used in the hospital. This also gave her two meals a day in the cafeteria. The rest of the time she spent with Betsey.

After a time the hospital let Mother move the cot upstairs into Betsey's room, where she slept. After six weeks of this life she just had to get out of there. She came home, and Dad took a week of his vacation time and took her place. He had to rent a room.

Since Dad had to keep working while Mother was gone, he found a "hired girl" who came to stay with us during the day. Nora Handeland, about high school age, came early each morning and fixed the breakfast for us. Then she did the laundry, shopping, cooking, cleaning, and cared for the three of us. I was supposed to help with the dishes, but Gloria and David were too small to help. I recall the extreme embarrassment I had when I was sent to take my bath. Nora felt that I didn't get clean enough, so she came into the bathroom to inspect me while I was in the tub. I complained loudly with the plea, "I'll do a good job. Just leave me alone."

"I don't trust you," she coolly replied, as she bent down and checked behind the ears and looked at my hands. I covered myself with the washcloth as best I could. I made sure in the future that I would get clean.

I must digress here to explain about our bath ritual when I was a kid. First of all, we took baths every Saturday night, whether we needed them or not. In our house we did not have hot water except in the winter when the side-arm heater coil running through the fire box of the furnace heated the water, which ran back into a tank. When the furnace was not working, which was most of the year, we heated a large kettle and a tea kettle of water on the kerosene stove in the kitchen. The gummy rubber stopper was placed in the drain hole. A chain ran from the stopper to the faucet assembly.

Then the hot water was poured into the tub, and the tea kettle was filled again and put back on the stove. Then cold water from the tap was added to the water in the tub. The water was constantly tested until it was cool enough to start the bath. First came my brother, David, since he was the youngest. Nora had to bathe him, so she got down on her knees beside the tub and, armed with a washcloth, attacked him. He was placed on the bath mat and handed a towel to dry himself. Then he was sent to his bedroom to get his pajamas on. Next came Gloria because she was the next youngest. Nora got the tea kettle from the stove and poured the new hot water into the same water in the tub that David used.

After she finished with Gloria, she took her into the bedroom to see that she got dressed after she poured the last tea kettle of water into the same water. Now it was my turn. By now the soap residue had begun to form scum on the sides of the tub, and the water was far from clear. If Betsey would have been here, it would have been worse. We were taught to avoid wasting hot water. When Mother was home and in charge of the bath night, she did the same things, but she started with Gloria; she was usually the cleanest to begin with. Without a doubt, I was the dirtiest.

After six months of shuttling back and forth to Iowa City, Mother came home. From then on she spent one week with Betsey and three weeks at home. She was not well herself, and the constant strain was just too great.

One day, nine months after the surgery, Mother was lying in bed in the front bedroom. Dad was working. The telephone rang and I hurried into the living room. I got the footstool and dragged it to the dining room under the phone. Our phone at that time was a square black box on the wall about 4 1/2 feet high. I took the receiver off the black hook on the left side and moved my mouth up to the mouth piece and said, "Hello."

"Is your Mother home?"

"Yes, but she is sick in bed."

"Is your Dad home?"

"No, he is at work at the college."

"Who is the oldest person in your house now?"

"Me. I'm nine years old."

"Oh, I need to tell your parents that Betsey just died. They need to make some arrangement to come and get her. Can you get someone to come and help you?"

"Yes, I will," I said as I hung up and ran to tell Mother. She started crying loudly, so I went back into the living room and decided to run over to Carrie Skrovig, a spinster friend of ours, who was also my Sunday School teacher. She lived about a half block away on Campus Avenue. Carrie said, "I'll go take care of your mother. You run and get your Dad," as she hurried out of her front door, still wearing her apron.

This was a tough time for the entire family. Dad called Rev. Rogness, the Bethesda Lutheran pastor, and discussed what to do. Dad called the funeral home and got the fee that they would charge to get Betsey, but it was more than they could afford. Soon Rev. Rogness arrived. He suggested that he would drive Dad to Iowa City to get Betsey. Carrie packed some sandwiches, and they left immediately for Iowa City.

When they got to the hospital, the staff didn't want to release the body. They said that it had to be given to a licensed mortician. Rev. Rogness talked and talked as he explained that Dad just did not have the money. Finally, he got them to agree to release her, if she would be taken to a mortician in Ames as soon as they got back. The attendants placed her body in a white cloth bag and put her in the back seat of the car. They started back to Ames late at night.

Dad told us later that they stopped once for gas and also at a roadside tavern along the way where Rev. Rogness asked Dad to go in and buy him a bottle of pop. He explained that he just couldn't go into such a place. They got back to Ames very early the next morning, and they took Betsey to Duckworth's Funeral Home. Betsey was buried in the newest section in the Ames cemetery at the southeast corner. My parents were buried nearby at later times.

My folks could not afford a marker, so for a time Betsey only had the aluminum plate that was driven into the ground by the funeral home. It had her name in separate letters on one line. This bothered Mother a great deal. She vowed that they must have a good marker before another winter went by. Sometime during the year, as Mother looked through the Montgomery Ward catalog, she discovered that she could order cast bronze markers for cemetery lots for \$18.00. They were small but would be permanent. Mother ordered one, paying the down payment, and the rest was paid in installments over the next year.

When the marker came, Dad got one of his friends at work to help him mix the cement and pour a base for the marker. Then he took all of us out to see it. I did not like it because it was a shiny gold color. Mother was happy as it was something that would last. Now, in later years, I admire it because it has turned a beautiful green-shaded bronze color. It no longer looks cheap. I realize now how expensive it was, compared to what my folks had to work with at the time.

Mother realized that the only recent picture she had of Betsey was one she had made in the dime store in a machine that gave you 4 poses for 25 cents. She made copies for the four of us. Since this picture was so small, she called Mr. Hamilton to check on an enlargement. I was instructed to run up to Hamilton Studio, located three blocks west on West Street, to deliver the single picture of Betsey. He took a picture of the small photo and made a 6 X 9 enlargement of it. Dad made a wooden frame for the picture, and the folks hung it above the door to the bedroom she last occupied.

Now I think of all the things we did together. When we were on 13th Street, she went with me to sell the vegetables that Dad raised in our garden. She carried the money, but I made all the contacts, priced the produce, and made the change. She and I walked together to Sunday School in the Bethesda Lutheran Church at 7th and Kellogg. One winter day, we arrived nearly frozen. Mother did not realize how cold it really was. The Sunday School teachers put our hands in a pan of cold water to thaw them out, got us warmed up really well, and made sure we were bundled up when we left for home.

One summer day as we went back home from Sunday School, I had to go to the bathroom and there was none in the area. I decided that I had to go immediately, so I went behind a tree on the parking. Betsey was angry with me and couldn't wait to get home to tell Mom. Mom asked me if that was true. There was no use lying as Betsey always told the truth. Mom told me that I could not go to the movies the next week. This was severe punishment. I saved long and hard for the dime admission at the Capital Theater at the east end of Main Street. There were always two features: one a western and the other an adventure movie starring someone like Andy Devine or Chester Morris. Later, to get even, I told Mom a lie about what Betsey did. Mother scolded Betsey, who came to me with tears in her eyes. She asked me why I had lied. For once Mother believed me. Betsey took her punishment without complaining. To this day that has always bothered me as one really bad thing that I did to her.

Gloria Mae Nass

By the time Gloria was born I was about five years old. She always seemed very small to me, as she could not play what I was playing. When the Logsdon girls worked with me on the tightrope walk in their backyard, which I never really mastered, she could barely totter along. I thought that I was as unsteady on the rope as she was on the ground.

After we moved to West Street she stayed in the house with Mother most of the time, while I wandered the neighborhood looking at things.

One day Mother told Gloria to go to the basement to get some fruit for supper. We kept all of our canned goods in a cupboard down there. She stumbled and fell headlong down the stairs. We heard several bumps and a cry and then the sound of glass breaking. Mother ran down the steps to discover Gloria lying in a heap of broken glass. She had fallen through three window panes, that Dad had leaned against the wall at the base of the stairs. He was getting ready to repair a broken window in the storeroom. I had kicked it out with my foot while wrestling on my bed with Keith Brandner. Gloria had several small cuts that required cleaning up and bandaging, but she was not seriously injured. I knew that I'd get some of the blame, but Dad really caught it from Mother for leaving the glass at the bottom of the stairs.

As a small girl, Gloria was a saver. When we got candy at the Christmas program each year, she would save her box and slowly ration it out. I always gobbled mine up immediately. I was always begging candy from her by promising to be nice to her. She usually did not fall for that line. I couldn't figure out where she hid it, and I really tried to find it each year. One spring day, when Mother was deep in spring housecleaning, I was assigned the annual task of vacuuming out all of the hot and cold air registers in the house. The covers were to be taken outside and washed thoroughly. When I got to Gloria's room, I went into the closet to lift up the large cold air register. As I got down on my knees to clean it, I found Gloria's box of candy from the last Christmas. Hurriedly I opened it. It was wormy. That was disgusting. She could have shared it with me instead of letting the worms eat it.

Gloria had a tough life at home, as she was the only girl after Betsey died. Mother expected her to do about everything. I recall that the cooking was the source of most complaints. Mother was an excellent cook, but she cooked mostly without recipes. Since Mother was frequently ill, she became very demanding of Gloria. When Gloria did not know how to prepare some food, she would go to the bedroom door and call into the darkened room for instructions. Mother became impatient as she called back, "Brown the meat, then add a pinch of this and a gob of that, etc." Of course, Gloria never was able to do it right. Then Mother would scold her with some comment as, "Well, I guess that I'll just have to do it myself."

I think that Dad really liked Gloria the best of all the kids. He treated all of us about the same, but he would hold Gloria on his lap and call her by his pet name for her, "My peanut."

I usually had the chore of doing the dishes, but Gloria had to dry. Dad came home from work at the college at 6:00 each night. He went back at 10 minutes until 7:00. Gloria and I cleared the table as the water was heating in a large pan and a teakettle on the kerosene stove in the kitchen. In the winter we had hot water that we got from a side-arm heater tank attached to the furnace. When the furnace was running, it heated water through a coil in the firebox. Even in the winter we had to have a teakettle of boiling water to "scald" the dishes before we dried them.

Dad made a wooden box for me to stand on when I was small and had the job of drying the dishes. As I grew taller the box was passed to Gloria. The scalded dishes were very hot for Gloria to handle. I got along with the dish washing pretty well but I hated the pans. One time I ran a meat fork tine into my hand and it required bandaging. Mother told me that I must first start with the silverware as that was the part we actually put into our mouths. Next came the glasses and cups because we put our mouths on them. Last came the plates. I still wash dishes today by the same pattern I was told to use at home.

I generally had to put the dishes into the cupboard, as Gloria was too short to reach the shelves. As I grew older and took the soda jerk job at the drug store, Gloria and David were assigned the dishwashing task. They were pretty good buddies, and I still have a picture in my mind of the two of them working together at the kitchen sink. I only pestered Gloria when I went near, by snapping a wet towel on her rump as she dried the dishes that David washed.

Gloria got a job as a waitress at Scotty's Chicken Inn on West Lincoln Way, a block west of Franklin. The Throckmorton family owned and operated the restaurant. Ada was a very, very large woman, and her son Adel was just about the same size. Dad used to walk out to the restaurant at night to walk home with Gloria.

Gloria went on to attend Waldorf College in Forest City. When I was a senior at Iowa University, I hitchhiked from Iowa City to visit her. I stayed overnight; she introduced me to the college; we ate supper together and enjoyed an evening together in Forest City. I returned the next day, stopping off in Ames for Sunday dinner with Grandma McGee. She always served the best fried chicken, mashed potatoes, gravy, and "Food for the Gods," which was a fruit salad in whipped cream that I dearly loved.

After I graduated from college I went back into service. After service in Germany I returned home for a few days and then went to Oregon to work in a lumber mill. While I was gone, Gloria married Oliver Danielson at Bethesda Lutheran church in Ames. She had three children: Linda, David, and James. After a divorce, she taught in the inner city school system in St. Louis, retiring in 1999. She remarried twice, the last time to a man we have never met, Bill. They divorced. Gloria now lives alone in her home in House Springs. Her life has not been pleasant. Her working conditions are not good. Her health has caused her some problems. She has had several surgeries on her left knee, a condition that has affected all three of us.

She and David were very close while they were kids, as there is only two years between them. Even today they remain fairly close, as they correspond and visit each other quite often.

David Allen Nass

When Mother was pregnant with David, she experienced a great deal of difficulty. She had to stay in bed for a very long time, so she could not cope with the other three kids. Betsey was shipped out to friends in Ames, and I was sent to Uncle Herman and Aunt Mary's farm in Storm Lake for the summer.

I need to explain about Mary and Herman. In fact, they were not related at all to us but were related to my mother's first husband, Dewey Maddox. He had died in the service in the Coast Guard after World War I. My parents and they were very close, so a letter requesting that they keep me for the summer brought them to Ames in their old Ford. I was loaded up with my clothing and went off to the farm.

Uncle Herman had a constant shadow as he went about his farm chores. I trailed along as he slopped the pigs, herded the cows into the barn and milked them, always squirting some at the cats in the barn. I got to ride on the top of the load of hay that they hauled on a rack to the barn. It was exciting to watch them load the hay by means of large tongs, hoisting a big load up to the roof beam where it swung loose and into the haymow. The men on the wagon worked with pitch forks, and Uncle Herman walked the horses that hoisted the hay. I had a free run of the farm and found it most exciting. I never really got homesick that I can recall.

One evening as Uncle Herman worked to get the horses into the barn and into their stalls, one balked at the door and hesitated. Uncle Herman slapped him across the rump as he yelled, "Now, God damn it, get in there." That impressed me, as I had never heard that before. As a couple of other horses went by me into the barn, I reached up as high as I could and slapped the horse and yelled, "Now, God damn it, get in there." Uncle Herman dropped what he was doing and hurried me by the arm into the house where he turned me over to Aunt Mary and Bernice, his oldest daughter.

"Wash his mouth out with soap," he instructed. "He said some bad words out in the barn."

I protested to no avail as Bernice lathered up the soap while Aunt Mary held me. My mouth tasted very bad as it filled up with soap suds. Then when I was released, I ran to the sink and, with my cupped hand, washed it clean again. It didn't seem fair to me that I got my mouth washed out and Uncle Herman didn't, but I didn't say anything. Many things do not seem fair to a kid.

My summer went by very fast. It was exciting to climb into the oat bin, enjoying the clean smell and wiggling my way down into the oats. The fresh cut hay, piled up in the hay mow, smelled sweet as I climbed up the wooden ladder fastened to the end wall of the barn. Uncle Herman cut the grass in the orchard with a sickle-bar mower, and I took a small wagon out there and put up my own hay. Feeding and watering the chickens was another delight to me as I followed Aunt Mary on those chores.

While I was at the farm, I got a letter from Mother telling me that I had a new brother and that his name was David Allen. She told me that she missed me. It was the first letter I had gotten. The girls decided that I should write Mother a letter, so they got me a pencil and a sheet of ruled notebook paper. I printed the letter, telling her that I was fine and wondering what David looked like. Many years later Mother gave the letter back to me. She had saved it all of that time. I still have that letter today.

It was time for school to start, so Aunt Mary and Uncle Herman brought me back home. My first look at David did not impress me, as he was too small to be any fun.

After we moved to the north side of 13th Street, David got very sick. Mother rigged up a tent out of a white sheet and put an electric hot plate on the floor beside the bed. She put a tea kettle on the stove to generate steam. We other kids were cautioned to stay out of that room as it was very dangerous. Mom and Dad stayed awake in shifts to make sure we did not have a fire.

In the summer, when I didn't have to take care of the goat, my job was to watch David on the front lawn. I was given several graham crackers that I was supposed to feed to him. He didn't have any teeth to speak of, so my job consisted mostly of shoving a corner of the cracker into his mouth until it got soggy and then breaking off that corner. It took forever. It is a wonder that I didn't choke him, as I pushed more and more crackers into his mouth.

Later we moved again, this time to West Street. David was big enough to get into trouble often, but he was more fun for me. Mother never knew what to expect from him. He always ran away from her whenever her back was turned. To stop this, Mother got a long piece of clothesline rope and tied one end to the back of David's overalls and the other end to the clothesline pole. David played around the pole with his toys, and Mother went back and forth to the house to get other baskets of clothes to hang up. One time when she came outside, she saw the overalls still tied up to the pole but no David.

She called for me to come and help her find him. I went down Woodland to the creek, as it was an attractive place to play. Mom headed east toward the college campus. About a block from home Mother saw our landlord, Lester Armstrong, carrying David upside down under his arm. David's legs were kicking in the air as Mr. Armstrong walked along with his straw hat strategically placed over his bare buns.

"Did you lose anything, Mrs. Nass?" he called to her. "I found something."

David loved to play outdoors, and, for a time, could not be convinced to go inside to go to the bathroom. Mother looked out the front window one time to check on him and discovered he was standing at the edge of the embankment urinating over the sidewalk. She was mortified as she ran from the house to get him.

David and I shared the front bedroom for a time. My parents slept in the storeroom as Gloria used the back bedroom. David was forced to use the top bunk, since I was bigger and wanted the bottom bunk. He fell out of bed several times until he got used to sleeping up there. One day he was sitting on the bunk playing with a coat hanger. He slipped and fell to the floor but got tangled up in the hanger on the way down. The hook part of the hanger went up into his mouth from his chin. I looked down at the bloody mess and ran for Mother. She hurried into the room and picked him up. She worked for a bit to extract the coat hanger as he was screaming, but she gave it up. Instead she ran out the front door, down the front steps, and into the street. She flagged down the first car that came along and told the driver to take her to Dr. Armstrong's house, which was about four blocks west on Woodland Avenue. By the way, this Dr. Armstrong was not related to our landlord, Lester Armstrong.

The doctor was at home preparing to eat his lunch as Mother ran into the kitchen with David. Dr. Armstrong moved the dishes aside and had Mother put David on the kitchen table. He removed the coat hanger and stitched up David to stop the bleeding. Then he gave him a shot for the pain and told Mother to bring him to the office the next day so he could check him out.

The B-B Gun Incident

Another event happened to David that was caused by me. I still think about it today. I begged and begged my mother and dad to let me have a B-B gun. I'd saved enough money to buy an old one that Bill Steele owned. Dad said, "No, it will just cause trouble." I kept at it until Mother weakened. She said, "Okay, you can get it if you promise never to shoot it inside the house."

I quickly agreed. Then I stalked the wooded area behind our house for squirrels, rabbits, and sparrows. I even shot at fish that swam in the creek. My shooting left much to be desired as I seldom hit anything I was aiming at. I must confess to several broken window panes in Mr. Armstrong's barn behind our house, that he had converted into three garages. He probably suspected me, but he never said anything about it.

One evening as the "happy hunter came home from the woods," I unscrewed the cap from the tube that held the unused B-B's. I poured them back into the cylinder they came from. I shook the gun and heard no rattle, so I knew it was empty. I pulled the trigger to clear out the compression. Then I walked into the house and went to the storeroom, which by now was our bedroom. (Mom and Dad had switched into the front room.) David was sitting on the floor in the middle of the room playing something. I told him to move over so I could get by. He didn't move, so I said, "I'm going to shoot you if you don't move out of the way." I raised the gun in his direction.

He just laughed and said, "You can't hurt me 'cause it isn't even loaded."

"I'll show you," I said, as I cocked the gun and pointed it at him about three feet away.

He still laughed, so I pulled on the trigger, and Pow - he fell over in a heap. I moved to him to roll him over, and I saw blood running down his face.

"Mom, I just shot David," I yelled into the kitchen.

"You what?" she yelled.

Mother came on the run and scooped him up to check him over. She realized that it was serious, so again she ran into the street and flagged down a car, as she yelled to me, "Turn off the stove and run get Dad right away." A passing motorist took her to the hospital, where the doctor removed the B-B from his nasal cavity.

I shut off the stove and went to the Mechanical Engineering Building to find Dad. He told me to go straight home and stay with Gloria and not go outside the house. Then he caught the bus to join Mom at Mary Greeley Hospital.

The doctor told Mother and Dad that David was lucky; the B-B would have hit his eye, if it had been a half-inch on either side.

I was really worried as I sat at home with Gloria. After a time they brought David home and put him on the couch with pillows and a blanket. I waited for my punishment but kept a low profile as I tried to blend in with the wallpaper. Neither Mom or Dad even spoke to me, but they did talk to Gloria as Mother returned to the ruined meal preparations. I heard a lot of banging through the floor register as Dad was working on something in the basement.

Finally Dad came back up the stairs and came to me with this pretzel-shaped hunk of metal. "Here's your gun," he said as he handed the mess over to me. He had put the gun in the vise and bent it around and around on itself. The stock was broken. This gun would not shoot again. "I don't think you'll be doing much more shooting in the house with this gun."

While Gloria was Dad's pet, there was no doubt that David, the baby of the family, was Mother's pet. He could do no wrong. We felt that she spoiled him rotten. My own kids feel that way about Mara today, so I suppose it is natural to spoil the last one in the family.

I was a very poor student in high school. English and literature were despised. Typing was a real pain to me. I was clumsy in shop, and didn't care for history. At the present time this strikes me as odd because I love to read, write history, and do research. The only areas that I liked in school were mathematics and physics. Ruth Miller was my math teacher at Welch Junior High; she moved to the high school the same time I did, so I had her for several other math classes. These were easy and enjoyable, so I did pretty well with them.

About this time I looked over David's report card when he was in about 9th or 10th grade and saw that he had a bad report, especially in math. He had a D grade. I had a "big brother knows best" fit about it with Mother. "It's passing," she exclaimed defensively.

"His grades are awful. He'll never amount to anything," I yelled.

Then I got into a big argument with both Mother and David at the same time. Mother defended David as I attacked him. Mother said, "Go mind your own business." I got very angry that she did not recognize my great wisdom about child raising, so I stormed out of the house. Then I stormed back inside, went into my room, and lettered a crude sign that said, "Home for the demented," which I hung on the front door as I slammed it shut.

To burn off my anger I grabbed the snow shovel and started clearing the long west sidewalk that ran down to the bottom of the hill. It always drifted in very badly, so that gave me a lot of exercise. Mother sent David to get Dad, who, after listening to their side of the argument, came to see me.

"Are you cooled down yet?" he asked. Sheepishly I replied, "Yes."

Then I went back into my own room and went to sleep. David slept the night on the couch as a bed that Mother made up for him. I never offered my advice to her again.

I went into the Army, serving in Japan for two years, so I was absent from Ames when both Gloria and David went through high school. Then I returned to Ames and went to Iowa State for two years. I lived at home with my parents during that time. Then I transferred to Iowa University to finish up and left home for good. After graduation from college, I went back into the Army again, this time to Germany.

David finished high school and went to Luther College. I was home and on my way to my first teaching job in Pierson at the time David was to move to Decorah. I drove him there and helped him unload; then I drove across the north part of the state to Pierson. I put a pound of limburger cheese in the bottom of his footlocker to give him something to remember me by before I left. It must have caused him a real stink before he found it.

Next, David transferred to Iowa University. At this time I was married and our son, Brian, was a new baby. I planned to attend summer school there, so I asked David to find an apartment or house I could rent for the summer. He did a good job and found a small house in the southwest part of Iowa City. He made all of the arrangements and sent me the keys. We only needed to move in.

I put most of what we needed, or felt we needed, into an old trailer that Dick Berhow had left behind when he went to Oregon. We drove to Iowa City, found the house, and moved in. Marj went to work immediately on the kitchen which was a filthy mess. In the evening of our first night there we relaxed in the living room. The door to the basement opened, and a girl came in and walked to the kitchen with some dirty dishes. She put them into the sink and said, "Hi. I'm going to work now, but I'll be back later to clean up."

Both Marj and I were stunned and wondered where in the world she came from. I went into the basement after she left and found that there were sheets of green plastic hanging to form a room in one corner of the basement. A shower and toilet were also there. This stranger lived in the basement.

Her name was Stella, though I called her "Stella in the Cella." We learned that she came with the house. David never bothered to tell us about her, but he insisted that he did not know about her. We must have made her feel very unwelcome as she never came upstairs again. I think the fact that we kept the basement door locked gave her a hint.

David graduated from Iowa University in Speech Pathology. He practiced in Omaha for some time. He married Mary Anne Bakke, and they had four children: Kris, Steffen, Heidi, and Kari. They divorced. David moved into trailer, after living in a room in a house on Hyland Avenue. Mary Anne is now deceased. She is buried in the Roland Cemetery. David worked at Avey's Standard Oil Station. When I was a kid, I was sent there with 14 cents tied up in a handkerchief to buy a gallon of kerosene for the kitchen stove. David has written a book of humorous recollections of his days managing the gas station. It is entitled Hey, Mr. Gas Station Man. He has written two more books, one on the life of a farmer, the other a speech correction book. They are The Backward Farmer in 1995 and Wee Dee in 1988.

David retired two years ago and moved into a manufactured home in Garden Grove, Iowa on lots prepared by his employer, Larry Avey. Together, they cleaned up the lots, constructed a pond with an island in the middle, and created a park-like environment on approximately 60 lots that were owned by former Mormon families who passed through Garden Grove over 100 years ago. More recently David took part-time employment operating the Lamoni Visitor Center at the Lamoni exit off I-35.

At this writing, David has made another move. After he got on the Internet, he corresponded with a lady named Susan, from Connecticut. Eventually she came to Iowa, helped David pack up his things, and they drove to her home. There they prepared her house for sale, purchased a motor home, packed up about a dozen show dogs that she owned, and are now touring the United States.

It seems odd to me today that his son, Steffan, is now a Special Agent for the FBI, stationed in Florida. This was a dream that David had during his early years but was never able to realize. All of his daughters, Kris, Heidi, and Kari are involved in some form of education and speech therapy.

The Nass Family

Not much is known about the Nass family, as I have never been too much interested in genealogy. Mother (Marj) has had a great deal of success in tracing the Moles family but that effort has not really rubbed off on me. I do wish to record what little that I do know. Some I learned from reading the census films, some from reading obituaries, but most was learned from long ago conversations with my parents and grandparents.

My great grandfather was named Severt Engebret Nass. He was born in Norway and came to America with a large group of Norwegian emigrants, settling first in Lisbon County, Illinois. They moved on to settle in Palestine Township, Story County, Iowa. Their farm was located southeast of the small town of Huxley, a predominately Norwegian settlement. The Norwegian spelling of Nass was Naes where the a and the e were really one single letter with the "e" joined on the back of the "a." When Severt arrived in the U. S., he was told that the English language had no such vowel and that he had to choose either the a or the e. He chose the "e" and his name was officially Ness after he added the extra s. One census report that was handwritten spelled his name as Naes using separate letters. Following the custom of that day he was called S. E. Nass.

After the family moved near Huxley, he was appalled to find another family living in town with the name Ness. He did not feel they were reputable people, and he did not want to be associated with them. He decided to take matters into his own hands. He went to the postmaster in Huxley and told him, "From now on my last name is Nass." In those days it was a bit simpler to change a name, though it certainly would not have been legal then either. In any case, the change stuck and all accounts in the newspapers, legal papers, and church records record the name as Nass.

His wife was named Kari, sometimes found spelled Carrie in the census. The census was handwritten by the census taker, and he apparently spelled it the way that was familiar to him. They had two children, Albert Engebret and Anna. Albert was my grandfather, who was known to everyone officially as A. E., but was called "Britt" by his friends. After Severt's death, his wife moved into the town of Huxley. She lived in a house on the north side of the main east-west street, about 2 blocks west of the business district. I recall visiting the house with my father, but I do not remember Kari.

A. E. was born in May of 1864. He went into partnership with Oley Eide, as they owned and operated the Eide and Nass Hardware Store. It was located about a half block north of the Milwaukee Railroad depot, on the east side of the street. Albert married Oley's daughter, Betsey L. Eide. I have a silver spoon that was given to me by my father. It has the initials B.L.E. on the handle, and on the backside is the date Nov. 11, 1892, which was their wedding date. They had five children. The oldest was a daughter, Clara, born in 1893; next was my father, Seward, in 1896; then one year younger was another son, Martin L., in 1897; another son, Gordon, in 1899; and the last son, Edwin, born in 1903. Betsey died in 1903 giving birth to Edwin. The small boy, Edwin, lived only about four months. I can imagine the sorrow that my grandfather suffered in the loss of his father, Severt, his wife, Betsey, and his son, Edwin, all in 1903 within months of each other.

The 1900 census shows the entire family except for Edwin. Betsey's sister, Maggie, appears in the census also. She was 13 years younger than Betsey and apparently lived with them to help in the care of the family. After Betsey's death, Albert could not cope with the care of all of the children. My father, Seward, was sent to live with his grandmother, Kari. He continued to live with her until her death. I do not know if any of the other children were "farmed out," but Maggie continued to live and help care for the other children at home. I would not be surprised if Clara was placed into another home to help care for that family, since she and my father were the older two children. That is strictly supposition on my part. My father spoke only of his long stay with his grandmother. After a time Albert then married Maggie and they had one daughter, Elsie.

Albert and Maggie were the grandparents that I remember. They visited with us on occasion, but mostly we went to Huxley to visit with them. They lived in a fine two-story house about three blocks west of the highway. There were no more houses to the north of theirs. Just across the driveway on the north side of their house was a small orchard of apple and cherry trees. I climbed in these trees, sometimes not with the approval of Maggie. The north-south street passing by the front of the house continued just past the orchard before curving west, eventually passing beside the school house yard.

This house was built by my Grandpa, with the help of my father and Martin. Dad told me several times about mixing all of the concrete for the basement by hand. This would have been a very big job. The house had a brick foundation, a frame construction, and a large double brick porch with concrete floor. There was a living room, dining room, study, and kitchen on the first floor, along with a very large central hall. The stairs to the second floor extended from this hallway. The telephone was a hand cranked phone with a long oak case. It was mounted on the paneling at the base of the stairs. Two wires came out of the cabinet to affix to the brass terminals on the top of the case. Dry cells were located inside the case. The receiver hung on a cradle on the left side of the case; the hand operated crank was on the right side. With a long turn of the crank and a ring, you contacted "Central" who asked, "Number, please?"

Upstairs were four bedrooms, a small sewing room, and a large sun porch. I slept on the sun porch a few times, but my usual bedroom was the sewing room when I stayed for a few days at a time. Downstairs west of the kitchen was a pantry and a back porch. Most of the time the family came in and out the back door. The only time the front door was used was when they had company. We were family. The kitchen was one of the favorite rooms for everyone. A large iron range dominated the west wall. In the winter, the family and friends would sit at the kitchen table and converse, because it was the warmest spot in the house. The kitchen sink was located on the north wall, and it bothered me, as it had a large dark reddish-brown stain all of the time. It seemed dirty to me. I later learned that the water had a lot of iron in it, and the stain could not be removed.

This house was heated from a boiler in the basement, fired by coal. It was very modern for its time. I loved to sit in the living room beside the south windows and read to the comfortable hiss - hiss of the radiator regulator. A small amount of steam was constantly escaping when the system was in operation. The house was a warm refuge in the winter, as the steam heat kept the house warm all of the time.

The front porch was another favorite spot of mine in good weather. The porch floor was about three feet above the ground. The north, east and south sides were bricked up to about three more feet. I loved to walk around the porch on this double brick wall, but it made my grandmother nervous. The steps were located on the south side of the porch. Grandpa told me that was because the sun would melt the snow and ice in the winter.

In the back of the house, just west of the orchard, was my most favorite building of all. It was Grandpa's carpenter shop. He had continued to operate the hardware store until he and Oley Eide lost it during the Depression. So many people could not pay their bills, and the final blow occurred when the "bank went busted" during the 1930's. Dad worked in the store after he quit school in the 8th grade. When he enlisted in the Army in 1917, his occupation was given as hardware clerk. After the store was gone, Grandpa took up the carpenter trade. He built houses, barns, and other outbuildings. In later years he concentrated on cabinet work.

This shop was a place of wonder to me. All of the power tools were run from one huge electric motor. It was connected by a wide belt to a shaft which hung about a foot below the ceiling. The shaft ran the entire length of the building. When the motor was turned on, the long shaft turned all of the time. Smaller belts were located at intervals along the shaft, each connected to a circular saw, bandsaw, jigsaw, drill, sander, and plane. There was a lot of slack on each of these belts so they did not turn the equipment until he pulled a lever to tighten the particular belt that he wanted. The smell of the place was of pine, cedar, and walnut. The chips on the floor were my playthings as he worked. He kept an eye on me at all times, making sure that I stayed away from where he was working. When he ran the "big saw," he told me to go outside until he was done.

One time, during the middle 1930's, I recall visiting as he was working on two Model T Ford truck chassis, which were parked along the east side of the orchard. He built large boxes on the back of each, installed a door opening to the rear of the trucks, put a window on each side of the box, and built steps at the rear to make an early-day version of a motor home. He built tables and benches along the walls that had storage under them. He built frames for two beds that were hinged along the sides and were suspended on chains from the ceiling for use at night. During the day they were chained directly to the ceiling. Along the front side of the box he put in a small sink and a shelf. He fitted a small icebox under the shelf.

To the south of the yard, Grandpa had built a large goldfish pond. He kept some very large orange-colored fish in the pond which swam among the lily pads. The blooms were pretty, but they had a strong odor that I disliked. Beside the pond he built a rose trellis, in two separate parts, connected along the top. This way the roses grew to form a gate. Inside the gate he built a bench on each side. It was a cool, private place as we sat inside the trellis while he read the paper each evening. I sat beside him watching the fish. Elsie's bulldog, Suzy, was always at Grandpa's feet.

We did not talk much as Grandpa was hard-of-hearing. To make myself heard I would have to shout or move up very close to him. Most of the time when I was with him, we did not communicate with words, but with gestures. He was an easy man to spend time with. He never got angry, was always kind, and always kept an eye on me to keep me out of trouble. I enjoyed walking along hand in hand with him. Suzy waddled along on the other side, as we went to town to get the mail, the paper, or supplies. Grandpa spoke Norwegian to his friends. Two that I recall were Barney Hill, a large, jolly man with a rounded stomach, and Johnny Floden. I never understood a word they were saying, but each would throw in a word or two in English for me.

We usually walked by the City Hall with the water tower at the back. Next we passed the fire station. When I looked inside the door all that I found was a very large hose cart that was hand pulled, along with some axes, hooks, raincoats and caps, and long ladders hung on the wall. I never recall seeing any horses. The town was small and the men, on foot, could probably provide the limited protection.

Johnny Floden moved to Des Moines into a house on East University near the State Fair grounds. This did not mean anything at all to me until 1939, when Grandpa asked Mother and Dad if he could take me to the State Fair. This was to be absolutely the best time in my life. We stayed with the Floddens for two days. We spent each day walking all over the grounds, into the barns, sheds, and other buildings. On occasion we stopped to rest on a bench under the shade of the large trees. Just east of the Varied Industries Building, we came upon a fenced-in track on which a person operated several small race cars, each powered by a gasoline engine. Grandpa asked me if I wanted to try a ride. "Yes," I recall yelling to make sure he heard me. The ticket booth was on the west side. As we made our way around the fence, I watched the other kids riding round and round. I found out that each got exactly two passes around the track where the operator pulled back on a long lever to stop the cars so the kids could get out. I had to learn how to run them before I got into one. The booth had a sign that said "Ten Cents a Ride" and under that it said "12 Rides \$1.00." Grandpa laid down a dime, and the man helped me into the car, giving me instructions about steering and not running into the fence or other cars. He shifted the lever forward and I was off.

What a thrill! I smiled at Grandpa. He waved back before sitting on a bench to watch me. I turned the wheel with great concentration. It was such a fine feeling to speed along the track - what freedom! My two passes ended quickly. I went to the opening and ran to my Grandpa to thank him. He nodded, and we walked on for some more inspection of the fair. "That was the most fun ever," I yelled up to him. We stopped and had some ice cream, visited a few more attractions, and found ourselves returning along the way we had come. We were at the putt-putt racecar track.

"Do you want to go around again?" he asked me.

"Yah! I sure do. Can I?" I cried.

We went up to the ticket booth, and Grandpa laid down a dollar and got 12 tickets which he handed to me. I was shocked. I couldn't imagine anyone spending a dollar so quickly - and for me!! I grasped the tickets

as I yelled "Thanks." Then I raced to the operator and showed him my tickets. I tore off only one and handed it to him, stuffing the other tickets into my pocket. I saw Grandpa smiling at me as he sat on the bench under a large elm tree. Later I realized that he might be tired, and this was a good way for him to get rested up.

After every two passes around the track the operator stopped me. I handed over another ticket and zoomed off again. This was the greatest thrill, and I could not wait to tell Mother and Dad about it. On the way back to Floddens that night I told Grandpa, "This is the most fun I have ever had." He only smiled down as we hurried along before it got dark.

My last visit with Grandpa came just over two years later in 1942, when I was 14 years old. Dad told me that Grandpa had a cancer in his stomach and that he was going to die. Mother and Dad had been driving back and forth to Huxley from Ames many times, telling me only that Grandpa was very sick. Now to learn he was going to die made me very sad to think that I would not be able to be with him again. After one trip, Dad came to me and said, "Tomorrow night after work I am going to take you to see Grandpa. Last night he asked to see you one last time." I was warned by Mother that he was very sick and that I should not pester him or make any noise. I didn't see how noise could bother him as he was hard-of-hearing, but I later realized that the rest of the people in the house spoke in whispers, and she didn't want me to upset them. We drove to Huxley in our Model A Ford, entering Huxley the back way on gravel. We pulled up to the back door, where we were met by Grandma and Elsie. Several people that I did not know were visiting around the kitchen table; some more were around the dining room table, and a few were seated in the living room. My dad went ahead of me into the study, telling me to stay put. After a bit he opened the door and motioned me to come in.

I saw that a bed had been put in Grandpa's study and that Grandpa was in the bed. I walked slowly up to the bed as Dad said, "Here's Edwin." Grandpa held out a shaky arm and motioned me to come up on the bed. As I climbed up beside him, I noticed he had short, white whiskers. That seemed odd to me, as he was always so clean and neat. He was very thin. Dad helped him put on his glasses. I had never seen him in bed before. He looked very sick. I had always pictured him as a stocky, robust man who could lift heavy boards and cabinets easily. Now he could barely lift his arm.

"Goodby, Edwin. Be a good boy," he quietly said.

"I will," I answered.

Then Dad told me that I had to leave. I went directly out the back door to sit on the back steps and look at the orchard and Grandpa's shop. I hoped that he would not die.

On the day of the funeral, Mother and I rode in the back seat of Gordon's newer Ford with Kitty, Gordon's wife. Dad rode up front with Gordon. We went to the service in the small white frame Lutheran Church in town, then to the cemetery south of Huxley. I thought of all of the times I sat beside Grandpa during church, as he tried to keep me from wriggling during the long service. The morning services were in English, the Sunday evening service in Norwegian. He usually went to both.

Many years later, as I drove to Des Moines with my family, I pulled off Interstate 35 at the Huxley sign and drove to the cemetery. My family asked me what I was doing, but I didn't say anything until I pulled up in the cemetery drive. As I stopped the engine, Miriam, who always noticed such things first, yelled out, "There's a stone that says Nass on it" before I could get my bearings. This plot holds the graves of Severt E. and his wife Kari, Albert E. and his wives, Betsey and Maggie, and their son, Edwin.

My Grandpa Nass made me many things of wood, which we kept in our house in Ames until after Mother died. He made me my first sled. He put a box on it originally, but it was removed as I grew older. It was put back on when Gloria and David came along. He built me a three-shelf "what-not" on which he carved my name on the edge of the top shelf. He made a small mahogany dropleaf table and two stools, one for Betsey and one for me. Then he built me an adult-sized desk. Of all of the items he built, only one

remains. The desk is located in the front bedroom of our home. I do not know what ever happened to the rest of the things he made for me, but they still exist in my mind.

The Rest of the Nass Family

Now I want to fill you in on the rest of the Nass family. Clara married Ben Sheldahl who was, according to Elsie, a farmer in the Huxley area. He later became a banker in Kanawha. We visited them about once a year, in the earlier days, by a trip in our 1929 Model T Ford. These trips were always an adventure for me. Mother did a lot of planning. She made sure we had a first-aid kit under the back seat, plenty of food in a basket for our school house lunch stop, and had the necessary clothing packed. This was all stored in cases which were held next to the side of the car with a wire fence apparatus that stretched along the outside of the running boards. We kids were put in the back seat. Mother ran the map which she was careful not to lose in the wind. Dad always worried that any paper we handled in the car would be blown to the front seat and would obscure his vision. We traveled at a steady pace of 35 miles per hour, as indicated by the cylindrical speedometer.

Clara and Ben had two boys, Arlo and Loren. They visited us once a year, usually as they were starting or ending a long trip in their Cadillac. They had the first air-conditioner that I had ever seen. It consisted of a large metal cylinder that was mounted on the window of the passenger side. The front of the cylinder had an air scoop which passed air through the cylinder. This was filled with water and a wick. As they traveled, they would pull on a small chain inside the car to rotate the wick to keep it wet. The warm air passing through the wick caused evaporation to take place, which cooled the car. One problem arose, however. The cylinder began to leak water into the car after the first year.

Arlo, the oldest boy, attended Iowa State College. He lived about a half-block up Campus Avenue from our house with Carrie Skrovig, my Sunday School teacher, who operated a rooming house for boys. Arlo went to work in Washington, D. C. after graduation. I visited in his home in Arlington, Virginia, once when I was in the service and stationed in Fort Belvoir, Virginia. His younger brother, Loren, was only about a year older than me. He died in a car accident when he was in his 20's.

When Clara died, Ben moved to Arlington to live with Arlo.

Gordon, my father's youngest living brother, married Kitty. They moved to Prairie City, where he practiced the trade of carpenter. He died at the age of 72 in December of 1971. I attended the funeral and took Sina Kloster back home to Nevada afterwards. She was a cousin of the Nass family of my father's generation. She served for many, many years as the Story County Recorder. Her Republican party affiliation let her stay in that position as long as she wanted, as Story was a strong Republican county.

Martin L. married Grace. They lived in Des Moines, both working for Equitable Life Insurance Company. They had a son, James, and a daughter, Sarah. Martin was an alcoholic, a problem that plagued him for years. My mother changed the name she called me from Martin to Edwin because of that, although she never told anyone but me and Dad. Technically, I was never called Martin. When I was very young the family called me Buster, named for the Buster Brown shoe character. Then as I grew to object to the name, she told me she would call me Edwin.

I really enjoyed visiting Martin and Grace. They were not stuffy people; I always had fun with them. Martin played ball with me when I visited their Euclid Street home. He took me for fast rides in a Nash car that he had equipped with a siren. I was taken along when he and Grace played golf. I had great fun as I tried to putt along with them. The best recollection of all was the streetcar ride. Martin arranged with their next door neighbor to take me along to his work for the day. He was a motorman for the street car line. I sat for the entire day behind the motorman, watching all of the passengers get on and off. The motorman let me ring the bell when there were only a few passengers in the car. He stopped at least three times that day at a Reed's Ice Cream Store along the line. He left the car and crossed the street to purchase me a small basket of lemon custard ice cream which I ate with a small wooden spoon. The little basket was made of

white cardboard, and it had a wire handle. This was my favorite flavor. Imagine being spoiled three times in one day!

As I grew up, Martin's and Grace's homes were my refuge. One of these homes was on East 12th Street. When I had pneumonia one time while hitchhiking back to Iowa City when I was a college junior, I got only as far as a restaurant on the corner of 13th and Euclid. Richard Berhow, my roommate and good friend, met me there and realized that I was too ill to travel any further. He asked me what he should do. I didn't know and couldn't think as I shivered with a high temperature. Finally I said, "Call my Uncle Martin." Dick called him and Martin drove immediately to pick me up. He took me home and put me on the couch in the living room. I heard him talking with Grace who asked, "What does he have? I don't want him here if he has something that he might give to Jim and Sarah."

Martin replied, "Well, I have to do something with him. He is just too sick to go anywhere. I think I will take him to the Veterans Hospital."

He assisted me to his car and drove me to the hospital. When we arrived he hurried inside and picked up a wheel chair and returned to the car. After I was inside, he went from office to office trying to get them to admit me. They refused because they said that they did not know that I was really a veteran. Finally I showed him a small sized photo copy of my discharge papers which I carried in my wallet. This discharge was given to me after serving two years in Japan. He took the papers and returned to battle the administration of the hospital. I heard him yelling louder and louder as they objected, saying that they needed a certified copy of my discharge. Finally, he wore them down and I was admitted. They determined that I had a fever of 103 degrees and that I had pneumonia. I don't know what would have happened to me if it had not been for Martin and his persistence.

When the softplugs blew out of my 1939 Buick convertible, I pondered what to do. I waited to cool the overheated engine, filled it with water, and raced to Martin's and Grace's house. I left the car with them and hitchhiked back to Ames. After my classes the next day, and after I had picked up some money, I hitchhiked back to Des Moines with my new softplugs. Martin helped me get the old plugs out, the new ones tapped back in place, and the car filled with water.

I returned to stay with them once when I had a date with a girl in Des Moines. I was home on leave before shipping out to Germany. This was to be my second stint with the Army. My position was called an "Involuntary Reserve," as I was called back into the Army after graduation from Iowa University.

Still much later, I returned to Martin and Grace many times when they moved to the small house behind their 12th Street home. Brian and his friends had become avid chess players. I took five of them to play in the state chess tournament for several years, when they were in junior high school. We used the second floor of the house as a dormitory for the boys and me. Grace was kept busy each morning preparing breakfast for five boys whose stomachs were bottomless pits. The boys all grew to call her Aunt Grace, as they planned their trips each year. Richard developed a special attachment to their big long-haired white dog.

In later years, I visited Martin and Grace in an apartment in Ankeny. Their daughter, Sarah, and her husband were living in Ankeny. After Martin's death, Grace lived in Waukee near their son, Jim, and in several different apartments in West Des Moines. Marj and I visited her about once a year.

Edwin, the youngest boy, whom I named in an earlier story, lived for only about four months. He died in 1903 and is buried in the Huxley Cemetery. I was named Martin Edwin Nass for two of my father's brothers. My sister, Betsey Ann, was named for my grandmother, Betsey Louise Eide Nass, who died in 1903 of consumption. Although that was listed as the cause of her death, my father said that she was not well after giving birth to Edwin.

Elsie, the youngest of the Nass children, was single for a long time. It seems to me that I was told that Grandpa's carpenter shop was converted into a home for Elsie in Huxley. I was never in that home. Elsie lived and worked in Des Moines for a long time. I recall visiting her at her clerking station in the J. C.

Penney Store. She married Orville Kennedy, who worked in construction. They were gone for a long time, when he worked on the Fort Randall Dam in South Dakota. After Orville's death she returned to Des Moines, caring for her mother, Maggie, for a long time. Marj and I attended the funerals of both Maggie and Elsie.

Severt Engebritson Nass

(Also spelled Engebretson, Ingebretson, and Ingebritson in various documents and papers)

Severt Engebritson Nass was born in Etne, Norway. He was married to Kari Engebritson Halvorson Heckerson before immigrating to America in about 1862 or 1863. It appears that instead of coming to America and landing on the east coast, the Norwegian immigrants came down the St. Lawrence Seaway into Lake Michigan, landing in Chicago. There was an early settlement of Norwegians in Lisbon County, Illinois, which attracted them. In search of cheaper land, a delegation of three was sent to Iowa, reporting back about fine lands being available in Story County. Anna Nass, a daughter, was born to the couple before they came to America. Albert Engebrit Nass, a son, was born on July 1, 1864, in Newark, Kendall County, Illinois, a year after they landed in the U. S.

The family moved to Iowa, traveling by train as far as Cambridge, Iowa. At that time, it was the end of the railroad. There they traveled by wagon to their farm in Township 82, Range 23, which was located in SE SE Section 31, and the SE SW Section 31, and the east 22 ½ acres of the East half of the SE SW Section 31 in Union Township, Story County. Here the family farmed. The land located at the SE SE Section 31 was purchased on June 17, 1876, from Jno. H. Sande. The sale was filed at the courthouse in Nevada, Iowa, on Aug. 7, 1876. The name of Severt was given as S. I. Naes which stood for Severt Ingebretson Naes. The land located at the SW SE Section 31 and the 22 ½ acres on the East side of SE SW Section 31 was purchased at the same time from John Richardson. It was also filed on Aug. 7, 1876.

About 1883 the town of Huxley was organized. A. E. Nass was the secretary of the group; Lars Kloster, husband of Anna Nass, was the president. Land for the town was purchased from the Milwaukee Railroad. The town was named Huxley after the grandson of the famous Aldous Huxley and is the only town named Huxley in the United States. A. E. built a house for his aging parents in town on a lot on the undivided half of the North Half of Lot No. 1 in SE ¼ of SW Quarter of Section 18 Township 82 Range 23. This purchase was witnessed by Geo. M. Maxwell. A. E. built a hardware store in partnership with his father-in-law, Oley Eide. A. E. married the daughter, Betsey Louise Eide, in 1892. (Note: The name Oley is also spelled Ole in some family records.)

The family were members of the Fjeldberg Lutheran Church, named after a parish in Norway. A. E. was confirmed on 10 November 1875 with the name Engebret Olaus Sjursen Nos. His name was actually Albert Engebret Olaus Nass. Nos was an early day spelling. Severt's name appears on the land records in Story County as Severt Ingebretson Naes. Severt's death notice in 1903 has the spelling Nass, as did Kari's notice a year later.

After Severt's death on Dec. 1, 1903, his son, A. E. Nass, became executor of the estate. There was no will. Severt left surviving him, Mrs. Carrie Nass, his widow, and the following heirs, viz: Mrs. Anna Kloster of age 46 years and who is the daughter of the deceased, and A. E. Nass of the age of 39 years who is the son of the deceased. The estate at the time of his death was the farm property, the town lot, and personal property of the estimated value of \$1600.00. On the 18th of May, 1904, an administrator's bond in the amount of \$3200.00 was posted by Carrie (Kari) Nass and A. L. Kloster. It was witnessed by John L. Brown, Notary Public.

An affidavit was filed on the 27th of June, 1905, stating that before the estate was settled, the widow, Mrs. Carrie Nass, died during the summer of 1904 having as her only heirs Anna Kloster and A. E. Nass. The affidavit was signed by Anna Kloster, her husband A. L. Kloster, and A. E. Nass.

A. E. Nass, administrator of the estate of Severt Engebritson Nass, listed the following inventory of the estate that was set apart to the Widow and exempt from Execution.

1 Spring Wagon, 1 Top Buggy, 1 Wagon Box, 1 set of harness, 1 Range, 1 Oak Stove, 1 Clock, all household and kitchen furniture, 3 lamps, all forks, knives, dishes, all wood choppers tools, all books, all paintings and pictures, and one spinning wheel.

It is noted here that the spinning wheel, which Kari Nass brought with her from Norway in 1862, was passed along to her son, A. E. Nass. He passed it to his oldest son, Seward Nass, who passed it along to his oldest son, Edwin Nass.

Chapter Eleven

The McGee Family

Dorothy Fae McGee

My mother was a McGee. Her father was Phelix McGee (sometimes spelled Felix), and her mother was Anna (Waltz) McGee. They lived in the Woodward, Iowa, area on a farm. Mother told me stories of the time they all went to live on a farm in Canada. She related that during a severe winter it was necessary for them to tie a rope between the house and the barn. It was their lifeline to follow in the blizzard conditions, as they went to care for the farm animals.

Later, they moved back to Iowa, but Phelix apparently did not want to be a part of the family anymore. He left the family and was never heard from again. Anna was left with three children to raise. The oldest was a boy, Robert, who became a plasterer at Iowa State College. He had a problem with drinking and fell down the basement stairs one time, breaking his neck. He is buried in the McGee plot in the Ames Cemetery.

Next came my mother, Dorothy Fae McGee. The youngest in the family was a brother, Edward McGee. We all called him Eddie. He lived with Anna all of his life. Most of the time, they lived in apartments above the stores on Main Street in Ames, Iowa. Eddie worked for a time for a gas station on the northwest corner of Fifth Street and Kellogg Street. The station was on the corner with a separate garage next door west. During this time Anna and Eddie lived above the station. One room was located above the garage. To get from the apartment to the garage it was necessary to walk between the buildings on a covered hallway that joined the two buildings on the second floor. Many times I recall visiting them in this apartment.

Eddie worked at the station. One job of his was to put warm bottles of pop into the cooler which was filled with water and ice. Some of the water was drained out as new ice was put on top. Eddie filled the cars with gas, checked the oil, and washed the windshields. Somehow, during this time, a car battery exploded in his face leaving him blind. Of course, at that time there was little that could be done to provide him with compensation. Their rent-free apartment was the only compensation that I ever knew of.

At a young age Mother married Dewey Maddox and they had a child, Leila. She was about three years older than I. Dewey served in the U. S. Coast Guard and was killed in an accident about 1925, just after Leila's birth. Mother and Leila moved in with Eddie and Anna, and Mother worked at several jobs - sewing, making salads at the Memorial Union, and cleaning houses.

My Parents

In 1926 Mother met my father, Seward A. Nass. They were married in 1927 in Des Moines, Iowa. My Uncle Martin and Aunt Grace stood up with them at the wedding. Mother's maid of honor was Jerene Olson. Leila continued to live with my grandmother after the wedding.

Earlier, I mentioned my father's family. Now I will focus on my father, Seward Ole Austin Nass. Dad quit school at the end of eighth grade to work with his father in the A. E. Nass Hardware store in Huxley, Iowa. My grandfather owned the store but was also a carpenter, so Dad ran the store when Grandpa was out on a job. During World War I Dad entered the U. S. Army and served in the Infantry. He was a member of the famous Rainbow Division that served with distinction in France. Dad's brother, Martin, also served in the Army but in a different area. Martin was gassed in the trenches and it affected him the rest of his life.

Dad returned to work in the store as a hardware clerk, according to a census report. He was doing that job when he was married. For some reason unknown to me, Mother and Dad moved to the upstairs of a large

house on the east side of Duff Avenue. In 1928 I was born in that house. I lived there for three years before we moved back to Huxley. My sister, Betsey, was born in the same house on Duff Avenue in Ames, Iowa.

During the Depression, life was very tough on my parents. Dad took day jobs where he could find them. He worked on farms, helped my grandfather with his building projects, and even washed windows, raked yards, and spaded gardens. Mother went back to her salad making job at the Memorial Union in Ames.

During the height of the Depression my father and grandfather lost their store. My cousin, Sarah Nass, asked me several times how they could lose a store. My father explained it to me this way. The farmers, who were the hardware customers, did not have money to pay for their purchases. Dad and Grandpa let them buy on credit. When the bank went "broke," as did so many, they lost all of their money that they had in the bank (which, of course, was not very much.) They owed creditors who pressured them for payment. When it was obvious that they could not recover, they sold the store to a man who had worked for them.

Mother was a very energetic person when she was young. She loved parties, going places, and excitement. Dad, on the other hand, was a very quiet man. He seldom spoke. When he did, it was mostly to answer questions or ask a few of me and my brother and sister. Dad was not an excitable person; Mother was always very excitable.

Mother's health began to fade when we lived on West Street. There were too many kids and very little money. She had a disease called undulant fever when we lived on 13th Street that weakened her. Then she developed a goiter which further took her down. She was crushed when Betsey died and spent much time in bed after that. Still, it was necessary for her to earn money to contribute to the family, so Mother started cleaning houses for people. At most places, she worked one day a week. One of those places was Dr. Rosebrook and his wife, Alice. They were very good to her. Since we had a large running doctor bill, they had her work for them most of the time to help pay it off. Mother spent a lot of time on the telephone talking with her friends. Much of the time she related her misery to them.

Many mornings, when we were not in school, Mother would tell me that "You are in charge. You all have jobs to do and I want them done by the time I get home." Then we three kids, Gloria, David and I, would lounge around the house, play games, listen to the radio and goof off. When we realized that Mother would be coming on the next bus, we had a whirlwind of activity. I folded the bedding on the daybed, stashed it under the couch, and picked up the clothes. The dishes were washed as fast as I could get the water heated on the kerosene stove. Mother never seemed to catch on to our lack of diligence.

Mother died of pneumonia when she was only 57 years old. She lived to see only Brian in our family and Linda in Gloria's family. She is buried in the Ames Cemetery on the south end near the grave of my sister, Betsey. Dad continued to live in the house until we could help with a yard sale. Then he moved into an apartment on the corner of Kellogg and 11th Streets, very near Mary Greeley hospital.

Now, back to the story of my dad. Finally, after a couple of very rough years financially, my father managed to get a job as janitor at Iowa State College in Ames. He was a very hard worker, a most honest person, and a plodder. He seldom complained of his lot in life. He kept this janitor job until he retired at age 65. Within a year of his retirement, he suffered a stroke that robbed him of his voice. He also lost his ability to swallow. He lived with us in Webster City for part of a year, but we had to put him into a nursing home in Ames, so that he could have a suction tube available when he ate his meals. He always had to eat at a table by himself after the other people in the home had eaten.

When I left him at the Riverside Nursing Home in Ames, he obviously did not want to stay. I made him promise to stay one month. I told him that if he did not like it, I would find another place for him. He stayed about two weeks. One day I got a telephone call at my school. It was the administrator telling me that Dad had his bags packed and was sitting on the curb out front. I told the man to persuade my father to go back inside and that I would come to get him.

When I arrived that evening after school, Dad wrote me a message saying that he wanted to go to the Soldiers' Home in Marshalltown. I had earlier inquired and was told there was a waiting list. A couple of Dad's friends from the American Legion had called on him, and they arranged for his admission immediately. He was sitting at the curb waiting for them when the administrator called me.

Dad moved into the Soldiers' Home and was very happy there the rest of his life. He lived for another four years at the home, but I had to take him to the Veterans Hospital in Des Moines in his last year to have a feeding tube placed in his stomach. I visited with Dad every Wednesday after school. My family went with me on holidays. My family was vacationing at Lake Okoboji when I received information that he had suffered a severe cerebral hemorrhage. He died alone. He is buried in the Ames Cemetery with my mother. It is near where my sister Betsey is buried.

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About the Author



Martin Edwin Nass

Martin Edwin Nass was born in Ames, Iowa, in 1928. Except for one year during the Depression, he had lived in Ames for the first twenty years of his life.

He graduated from Ames High School in 1946 and entered the U. S. Army as a Private. He served in the Occupation of Japan until 1948, at which time he returned to Ames and attended Iowa State College. In 1951 he transferred to the University of Iowa, where he earned a B.A. degree in mathematics. Before he could start his teaching career, he was recalled to active duty during the Korean War. After a summer of training in Fort Belvoir, Virginia, he was commissioned as a 2nd Lieutenant, before he shipped out to serve in the Corps of Engineers in Germany.

Upon completion of his tour of duty, he returned to Iowa to begin his teaching career at Pierson. While teaching he returned to school to earn an M. S. degree in mathematics. He taught in Atlantic for nine years before moving to Webster City, where he taught at Webster City Junior College. It later became one of the campuses of Iowa Central Community College.

He married Marjorie Moles while he lived in Atlantic. They are the parents of three children, Brian, Miriam, and Mara, all of whom were born in Atlantic. They have six grandchildren, for whom this book is dedicated.

Edwin also taught mathematics and computer science for Buena Vista University for a period of 19 years. He finally retired in 1999.

